

# The American MUSIC LOVER



Vol. VIII, No. 4 — DECEMBER, 1941  
**RECORD CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE**

*Edited by* **PETER HUGH REED**



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Geraldine Farrar

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**THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER**

45 FOURTH AVE. (Suite 311)

NEW YORK CITY

# The American MUSIC LOVER

DECEMBER, 1941 • VOL. VIII, NO. 4.



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## Editorial Notes

What Compton Mackenzie has to say to the English Government in his interesting editorial in the November issue of *The Gramophone* might well be brought to the attention of ours. The Government of course has no idea of the significance of the recent record releases in times of stress, Mr. Mackenzie says, "no idea, that is beyond heavily taxing recorded music under the impression that it is a kind of feeble luxury. However, the British Government has always been an enemy of the arts, and it is too late to moan now about its Philistine sympathies. Chiefly because it would have involved taxing the Bible, the proposed tax on books was abandoned . . ." Our own Government has been far friendlier to the arts, indeed the WPA work in this field has not yet been fully estimated. But since the Government has already placed one tax on recorded music, it might be well for someone to suggest to the proper authorities the value of recorded music, to forestall possible future taxation.

We cannot refrain from following Mr. Mackenzie in quoting from a pamphlet put out by H. M. V. in connection with its release of Dvorak's *First Symphony*. It states: "It is really of little use to denounce the artistic indolence of the music-loving public, for there is no evidence to suggest that it will, in any country, ever be different. There are certain works differing enormously in musical value which time shows to have a universal appeal; and upon these the public, quite rightly, voraciously fastens and feeds . . . Would the public, who cannot hear too often the *New World Symphony*, show any desire to explore — as once they did — the unknown territory of the *First*, *Second* and *Third Symphonies* or display any real en-

Published by THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, General Offices: 45 Fourth Ave., Suite 311, New York, N. Y.

- Peter Hugh Reed, Editor; Philip Miller, Harold C. Schonberg, Associate Editors; Paul Girard, Circulation Manager, Julius J. Spector, Art Editor.
- Walter C. Elly, Advertising Manager, 1728 Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y.
- Published monthly, The American Music Lover sells at twenty cents a copy in the U. S. A. Yearly subscription \$2.00; in Canada and all foreign countries \$2.50. Entered as Second Class Matter, June 5, 1939, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879. . . . Its contents are protected and may not be reprinted without permission in writing. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited contributions; and in no case will they be returned unless accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope. A month's notice is necessary in the change of an address.

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thusiasm for the *Fourth Symphony* by the same composer?" Mr. Mackenzie has his answers to this, but his answers are not ours.

It has long been our contention that the record companies are interested in artists first and music afterwards. The very fact that the composer's name is relegated to a small piece in parentheses instead of before the composition, and that the artists' names are featured boldly would bear this out. Further, the record companies are still regarding too many records as novelties, as they did in the early days of the phonograph. The fact that such records are musical documents and that they represent two things — music and artistry — is not by any means fully appreciated. The companies are, quite rightly, interested in making money. There is no question that the most popular records have paid for a lot of fine items on discs which in themselves hardly sold enough copies to pay for themselves, much less make a profit.

But the novelty of the record is a thing of the past, and although artistry deserves to be fully exploited, so too does the music. It is not too much to say that no record company, in any country, has shown any imagination in the merchandising of music. Yet, actually this is what the record companies are selling first and foremost. Music can be merchandised as effectively as breakfast food, coffee, and cigarettes. It has more lift in it, to those who like it, than any of the commodities mentioned. Everything in its place. In most of the advertisements of recorded music, issued by the leading companies, one notes continually how they miss the point on the music being offered for sale. Maybe the public will not have quite as much interest in such symphonies as the *First*, *Second* and *Fourth* of Dvorak as it

would have in his *New World*. That almost nostalgic title itself has sales power which the simple numerals of the other works do not own. But if, as H. C. Colles, the English critic, says, the public was ready to listen to Dvorak's *First*, *Second* and *Fourth Symphonies* as often as Hans Richter and others chose to play them in their day, perhaps it is our conductors who are at fault. To be sure, as Mr. Mackenzie points out, in those days the audiences were not so large; "it was in fact a select and limited public which enjoyed a sense of exclusiveness conferred by the possession of musical taste and understanding . . ." But nowadays, at least in this country, the audience for unacknowledged music is large, and the possibilities for expanding it limitless. We have always believed that the recording companies could play a major part in encouraging this expansion — by clever merchandising of the music. The result of such an advertising campaign would be to boost the sales of the worthier stepchildren in the catalogues and to arouse an interest in the music sufficient to call for more concert performances, which in turn would result again in more sales of records.

One suspects that, if radio gave the most popular works a rest and played lesser known ones by the same composers, public interest in the works outside of the so-called standard repertoire would grow by leaps and bounds. Too many people still adhere to the time-tested favorites, and wait for fortuitous experiences to take them off the beaten path. But if advertisers can sell to the public a lot of superfluous commodities and make their manufacturers rich, it strikes me that the same advertiser should be able to do more for music, which is by not by any means a superfluous product.

" . . . Though the music of Mozart has no being or birth or parallel of any kind except in man's thought, its being has the same ideality and finality as the simplest things in nature. The making of music by a Mozart has been likened to the instinctive spinning of the spider's web. The flaw in the comparison is that the Mozartean spider was such a unique insect . . .

The lightness of Mozart, the quality which makes his music tread on air, belongs to him alone. Everybody is supposed to know all about the spinning; but none can spin like him. And this lightness is what makes an hour of Mozart . . . something which no other composer could give us." *Musical Criticisms*, by Samuel Langford (Oxford University Press).



## VOCAL ARTISTRY

# FARRAR CHOOSES HER OWN FAVORITE RECORDS

Unaware that she was in reality making recording history as well as being accorded a unique privilege, Geraldine Farrar came before the recording horn for the first time at Berlin in 1904. She was the first prima donna to record her voice for posterity at the beginning of her career. All other prima donnas in the infancy of the phonograph were seasoned artists when they made their first records. It has been a source of wonder and amusement to many that the singer did not realize the importance of the event. But Geraldine is extremely honest about this, as indeed she is about all things:

"When it was suggested to me to make some records in Berlin, I took it all as a lark. The future value of those records never occurred to me. My first thought was — these will be nice souvenirs to send home to papa; maybe they'd give him an idea of how I've progressed. Hence, with this attitude of mind I was not frightened at the horn, as Calvé and Sembrich were when they first approached it, but merely amused at its silly proportions. Well, if this horn is to transport my voice to my father by means of an impression on wax, I shall sing as though I were in the Royal Opera House. Maybe what I hear from the horn

later when the finished record is played back will not sound too badly.

"I couldn't have been the first singer to feel somewhat appalled at the type of orchestra provided for a recording session. But I was more intent on my own job than on that of the orchestral players, who were far too few. So I broke into song. I am not sure whether I sang the brilliant finale to the first act of Verdi's *La Traviata* or the *Valse* from Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* first. It is not important. Record history does not depend upon the accuracy of numbers on records; there were in all eight selections successfully contrived in my first session in the recording studio.

"Among the first were two of my chosen favorites—*Sempre libera* from *La Traviata* and the *Valse* from *Romeo and Juliet* (*Juliet* was the role in which I was later to make my débüt at the Metropolitan Opera). Today those records can carry me back as quickly as anything else I know to the operatic realm of youthful exuberance; that is they could if I found it a pleasure to listen to records of my own voice. I have been what one would call a record fan, or an ardent admirer of reproduced music from either the radio or

the phonograph. In the reproduction of music, via these mediums, and more particularly in the reproduction of the voice, there is often amplified a tenuous material, which presents merely a sound-line rather than a true tone quality. The amplification, owing to the necessity of monitoring, often destroys the distinguishing feature of the individual, since it not only alters quality upon occasion but often urges it beyond its natural resiliency.

"An artist is best seen as well as heard; certainly this is true of the singer. Personality may be suggested in reproduction, but it is never fully conveyed.

#### Five Artistic Aspects

"In selecting a group of my own records, it seems to me that there are five aspects to a singer's art that should be considered. These are: (1) youthful exuberance, (2) vocal line, (3) emotion, (4) style, and (5) color or expressive nuance.

"I have chosen two records, made by me in Berlin in 1904, to illustrate my first point — youthful exuberance. They are my earliest favorites. In my book, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, I stated that I have often regretted that I did not make use of a letter given me by Nellie Melba to Mme. Marchesi, her favorite vocal teacher. But as subsequent events turned out, it was perhaps for the best. After all, I was no coloratura soprano, even though I sang several roles usually reserved for this type of voice. To have gone in for dazzling vocal gymnastics, to vie with the flute in impossible sky-rocket cadenzas held no interest for me. Sacrificing dramatic expression for pure sound only — merely a monotonous reproduction of even tone — was not my idea at any time of vocal artistry."

From the beginning of her career, Geraldine Farrar was a law unto herself. Her refusal to wear gloves at her first formal diplomatic dinner-concert at the Royal Palace in Berlin is a striking instance of her assertive individuality. As her mother said, she preferred to remain an attractive vision on these occasions, "rather than an animated sarcophagus covered with medals". One admires the singer for her individuality, even though it remains a fact

that her spontaneous addition of detail at performance frequently led her astray. I remember well the first time I heard her sing *Butterfly*. I was barely more than twelve or thirteen, but I was keenly alert to the actions and vocal artistry of the star of that evening. Most of the famous aria, *Un bel di vedremo*, was sung kneeling on the stage, but toward the middle she slowly arose, taking Suzuki's wrist, and with the words "un po per celia" she moved forward on the stage. The whole of the latter part of the aria was sung with added dramatic fervor, but to Suzuki, whose back was now turned halfway to the audience. At the end, with the admonition to Suzuki to "banish her fears, for he will return", she dropped her companion's arm and with the final "l'aspetto" threw her arms above her head in a superb dramatic gesture of elation and assurance. It was no mean feat to sing the high tones in that manner. I heard Farrar sing this role many times in the years that followed, but I do not recall that she ever duplicated this particular stage business, which seemed to fit so perfectly with her vocal estate that evening. Perhaps it is for this reason that the singer selects her recording of *Un bel di* as one of her favorites for depicting "emotion". But we are getting ahead of our story.

#### Gift For Self-Analysis

The following are the fourteen records Miss Farrar has chosen as among her favorites, and which she feels illustrate at their best the five aspects of her artistry.

Youthful Exuberance: 1. *Sempre libera* from *La Traviata* (G. & T. No. 53344 — I. R. C. C. 45-A); 2. *Valse* from *Romeo and Juliet* (G. & T. 33618 — I. R. C. C. 29-A).

Vocal Line: 3. *Wonnervoller Mai, O komm' herbei* (Gluck) (Victor 87127 — I. R. C. C. 67-B); 4. *Tutto per te* from *Le Donne Curiose* (Wolf-Ferrari) (Victor 88356 — I. R. C. C. 114-B); 5. *Via, così non mi lasciate* from *Il Segreto di Susanna* (Victor 87136); 6. *Nymphes et Faunes* (Bemberg) (Victor 88125).

Emotion: 7. *Un bel di vedremo* from *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini) (Victor 88113 or 18141); 8. *L'altra notte in fondo mare*

from *Mefistofele* (Boito) (Victor 88114); 9. *Lieber Spielmann* from *Königskinder* (Humperdinck) (Victor 88405—I. R. C. C. 114-B).

Style: 10. *Caro mio ben* (Giordani) (G. & T. 53430); 11. *Dove sono* from *Le*

*Color*: 12. *Gavotte* from *Manon* (Massenet) (Victor 87023); 13. *Seguidilla* from *Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart) (I.R.C.C. 40-A). *Carmen* (Bizet) (Victor 88511); 14. *Mama usciva* from *Zaza* (Leoncavallo) (Victor 87311).

In selecting the *Sempre libera* (made in Berlin in 1904) and the *Valse* from *Romeo and Juliet* (made in Berlin in 1906) as two records she appreciates or values for their unmistakable qualities of youthful exuberance, Farrar shows her uncanny gift for self-analysis. They are the most astounding examples of her early vocal artistry. There is infectious gaiety and elation in the former, and girlish *joie de vivre* in the latter. Neither of these roles was among the singer's most telling vocal contributions, and yet, according to reliable reports, she achieved some striking results in her portrait of *Violetta*, although the role was taking to her vocal resources in the early scenes. It is a pity that Geraldine did not leave us a recording from her "highly expressive and beautifully sung" third act.

In all Miss Farrar made close to 160 records during her career. Yet, in selecting a group of those she admires, she limits herself to only fourteen. But there are many other of her records to admire, and I shall mention a few of these along with the singer's selections.

Years ago Geraldine told a young critic: "I try to be true to myself and my own conception of the dramatic fitness of things on the stage, and I try to please my audience . . . In my humble way I am an actress who happens to be appearing in opera. I sacrifice tonal beauty to dramatic fitness every time I think it necessary for an effect . . ."

Over ten years ago, Geraldine told me: "If people are looking for purity of vocal quality they should not come to hear me. The mechanical attainment of mere singing never interested me; dramatic expression and nuance, style — of course — but never devoid of feeling, these were the artistic pursuits for which I have striven."

Yet Farrar could achieve vocal purity when it suited her purpose, and the records chosen to illustrate "vocal line" certainly bear this out. The classical simplicity of Gluck's music is set forth by lyrical singing which is also distinguished for its warmth and color. This air is not

a song by Gluck, but an aria from his opera *La Rencontre Imprévue* to which the famous German singing teacher Sieber (1822-1895) supplied new words glorifying the season of spring. The song was extremely popular in Germany at the time Miss Farrar was a student there. (This recording was re-issued by the International Record Collectors' Club, Bridgeport, Conn. — Record No. 67.)

The singer made this disc, as well as the *Tutte per te* from *Le Donne Curiose* in 1912, midway in her operatic career. *Via, così non mi lasciate* was recorded in 1913, and the French song — *Nymphes et Faunes* — in 1908.

Miss Farrar was in rare voice when she sang Rosaura's tender aria — so reminiscent of Mozart — "Ah, all for thee, my beloved, I burn with pure affection". A young girl is in love but not so much so that she cannot plan to satisfy her woman's curiosity. Of this disc, the singer says:

"I would like to impress upon all students the necessity for constant routine and careful vocal restraint when working at home on their scales. The emotional roles often exact a penalty in fatigue of body, spirit and throat. This delicious, lyrical aria offers opportunity for charming and smooth vocalism, very welcome after the emotional outpourings of *Manon*, *Tosca* or *Butterfly*."



The Goosegirl — 1912

Miss Farrar might have selected the duet from the same opera—*Il cor contento*, which she sang so charmingly with Herman Jadlowker, who appeared in the opera with her (Victor disc 89115). For here she illustrates not only vocal line, but also charm and expressive nuance. And the music of this duet is delightfully conceived. I never hear this recording without remembering the singer in the part of Rosaura, and her final high note owns a touch of coquetry which is not duplicated in any other record the singer has left us. In Susanna's aria, she pleads with her suspicious husband for "just one friendly look, one word of kindness" before he leaves the house; she is utterly charming. What she and Scotti did with this flimsy little operatic drama, only those of us who saw and heard them know. One other record I would add to the singer's list illustrating "vocal line": the aria, *Ora stammi a sentir* from the first act of Puccini's *La Tosca* (Victor disc 88287). This particular record is so much more cherishable than the singer's *Vissi d'arte* that one cannot but resent the fact that it was withdrawn in the latter's favor at an early date. It was made in 1911, when Miss Farrar was in perfect voice. (Her recording of Haydn's *My Mother Bids Me Bind my Hair* [I. R. C. C. No. 195] was also made at the same time.) As for the last of the singer's selections for "vocal line" — the Bemberg song — I admit she sings it charmingly, but cannot say that I admire the song.

#### A Great Record

I am completely in agreement with Geraldine's choice of the Boito aria — *L'altra notte in fondo mare* — as one displaying her emotional qualities at their best. Indeed, I would select it as her greatest emotional recording. It seems to me a flawless record of her artistry. It was made in 1908. The singing is of plangent beauty here, and the fatefulness of the tragic narrative is poignantly set forth. That humanizing quality for which the singer was justly famed is unforgettable here. Is it any wonder that one critic wrote when she sang this opera at the Metropolitan that "her Margherita in *Mefistofele* was a particularly repressed and dreamy repre-

sentation of the German maiden, one instinct with the highest dramatic and vocal values in the prison scene"!

Farrar's *Butterfly* was among her most popular successes. It has been well said that the spirit and not the surface of the character animated her acting and singing of the part, and that she "transformed a pathetically sentimental drama into a poetic tragedy" (H. T. Parker). Particularly memorable to me were her moments with Sharpless in the second act, especially when Scotti sang that part; for the two artists knew how to work together perfectly. But the music of *Butterfly* was cruelly taxing to Geraldine's voice, and her recording of *Un bel di* (made in 1909), although poignant and vivid, conveys this fact to me. Her record of the *Death Scene* (Victor 87030—made the same year) owns a piteous emotional intensity which is more impressive. Here the pathos is fully brought out, and though the vocal line is particularly difficult somehow the dramatic intensity of the scene seems to have carried the singer forward at her best.

#### A Memorable Role

"It is a far cry from the Nagaski house of *Butterfly*, situated on a high green-growing hill, to the snow-capped mountains of Germany's fairyland," says Miss Farrar. "But such is the scene of the touching little song from Humperdinck's *Königs-kinder*. The lovely goosegirl was one of my favorite parts — the story of the lost king's son and the goosegirl held in spell by an old witch — the flock of live geese used to bring a charming stage picture to life — all this transports us to the charming land of make-believe. *Lieber Spielmann* is the song of the little child in the last act of the opera, who asks the Fiddler to show her and the other children the way to find the lost king's son and his sweetheart, the goosegirl, who were stoned by the cruel villagers in the valley below, and who fled to the forest."

As the Gooselgirl, Geraldine was unbelievably beautiful and her singing was wrought with an emotional sensibility which she brought to only one other part, in my estimation — curiously a role she is said to have heartily disliked—Charlotte

in Massenet's *Werther*. The vocal line of *Lieber Spielmann* lies through the middle range of her voice and here she colors her voice darkly and brings a rare tenderness to her singing. (This record was made in 1912.)

#### Across the Years

Two records are chosen by Miss Farrar to illustrate "style" in singing. They are the 18th-century Italian aria, *Caro mio ben* (recorded in 1906) and Mozart's *Dove sono* (recorded in 1927 — one of the singer's few electrical recordings).

"To trace from the earliest days of my vocal artistry the development of style and expression, which are essential to the equipment of the vocalist, I have chosen these records," says the singer. "This is frequently neglected in the present day of haphazard performance and negligible preparation. It is the endurance of fundamentals and their value — despite the strain and fatigue of one's professional duties — that are illustrated in these records. I might have added another record to this list — the lovely *Alleluia* of Mozart (Victor disc 87126 — I. R. C. C. 30-B), which I first sang at a classical concert in Salzburg, but did not record until 1912, and which owes its popular appeal now to Lilli Lehmann's introduction of it at all her earlier concerts. *Caro mio ben* was recorded almost a quarter of a century before *Dove sono*, yet the vocal line is the same, even as it is in the *Alleluia* sung midway in my career. It was my whim to record for my own pleasure as much of the Countess' heartfelt aria as could be got on one side of a twelve-inch record, hence the lovely air is left unfinished at the close. A feature of the singing here, which I want my friends who admire it to note, is the value given to the musical phrase of the recitative — an art in itself, well nigh forgotten now. I owe the awakening of that requisite style and elegance in Mozart to my great teacher, Lilli Lehmann. She herself was always able to modulate the sweep of the great Wagnerian declamation into the graceful delicacy of this purely vocal utterance, maintaining that the fundamentals were one and the same, if properly in

the control and intelligence of the singer. Lilli was one of the greatest Mozart singers of all times. Each of the selections I have named has my own particular feeling, but stylistically they are the same — the first made at a time when I was still a very young singer indeed, the second (Mozart's *Alleluia*) at the height of my operatic success, and the last at a time when I had retired from the operatic stage."

All of Geraldine's Mozart recordings have the style and elegance, the firm vocal line, that are essential to the proper representation of that composer's style. Parenthetically, Miss Farrar tells me that no record "arouses memories of superlatively happy days in that jewel of a town, Salzburg" quite as much as does the duet *La ci darem la mano* (which she recorded with Scotti in 1909 — Victor disc 89015 or 8023). "My first appearance in Salzburg," says the singer, "was in *Don Giovanni*. You can easily guess that the irresistible Don was our well-beloved and popular Antonio Scotti. Johanna Gadski was Elvira, and the incomparable Lilli herself sang Donna Anna as none but a Titan could. I was the flirtatious Zerlina." It is not possible here to enumerate all of Miss Farrar's Mozart recordings, but I would like to speak about a few — there is the duet between Susanna and the Count from *Figaro*, *Crudel perchè fin'ora* (Victor 89027 or 8039), which is particularly cherishable, and her charming renditions of Cherubino's aria, *Voi che sapete* (Victor disc 88145 — I. R. C. C. 68-B) and *Non so più* (I. R. C. C. 67-A) (all made in 1908 and 1909), and her *Batti, batti* from *Don Giovanni* (Victor disc 88126 — also made in 1908).

#### Tonal Coloring

To illustrate "color" or nuance in her singing, Miss Farrar has selected three records made over a period of twelve years. The *Gavotte* from *Manon* dates from 1908, Carmen's *Seguidilla* from 1914, and Zaza's aria from 1920.

"These records are chosen to show the desired illustration of the accent, color and expression I brought to three entirely different characters," says the singer. "Tonal color is used to outline the changing

moods of a character. Manon, despite her insouciance and coquetry, requires nuance of tone to do justice to the lovely music Massenet has written for her. One will note that there is required here the same careful attention to phrasing, color and rhythm as in the *Seguidilla* to obtain the proper balance of the vocal line. In the music of the Spanish gypsy, the singing is in the same manner indeed as in my Mozart singing despite the passion and coquetry of a woman who voices a gypsy's fiery wooing. And in Zaza's tender aria to the child of her lover, the nuance of the vocal line is most essential to the success of the scene."

It seems only yesterday that I heard Farrar and Caruso as Manon and Des Grieux. Vocally both were richly endowed for these parts. There is a perfectly charming record of the *Letter Duet* from Act 2, made by these singers (Victor 89059), which bears this statement out. Indeed, the charm and coquetry which Geraldine brings to her singing makes this recording a close second to her performance in the duet from *Le Donne Curiose*. Then there are her record of *Adieu notre petite table* (Victor 88146 or 6111, made in 1908) and the tenor's *Ab! fuyez douce image* (Victor 88348 or 6020), both cherishing souvenirs of their artistry in these roles.

Geraldine's Manon was, as one critic has said, "an adorable creature". To me,

she was the ideal Manon. As for her Carmen, I have always been in agreement with the late H. T. Parker, who said that it took high place among the Carmens of our stage. I have heard her sing the part well over a dozen times, and although those performances varied greatly in details at different times, I still feel that in more than half of them she was one of the great Carmens of our time. Almost all of the records from this opera are among her best phonographic contributions, but in choosing her voicing of the *Seguidilla* she has undeniably selected the best one. The Zaza aria shows how well she could humanize a character — the scene from which it is drawn represents a turning point in a woman's life and one feels that had Leoncavallo done greater honor to that occasion, Miss Farrar could have followed suit. One other record illustrates Geraldine's tonal nuance in an unforgettable manner for me: the gypsy song of Mignon, known as the "Styrienne", which she recorded in 1908 (Victor disc 88152).

Undoubtedly there are other records of the singer which readers will wish to include in the various interpretative catagories. And perhaps some readers will have other favorites, but I am certain that many will be glad to know which of her recordings Miss Farrar herself prefers.

—Peter Hugh Reed

## BOOK REVIEW

**GREATNESS IN MUSIC.** By Dr. Alfred Einstein (translated by César Searchinger). Oxford University Press, 1941. 288 pp. Price \$3.00.

Here is a book that belongs on the library shelf alongside Parry's *Style in Musical Art*. Dr. Einstein, one of the foremost living musical scholars, presents some searching and provocative thoughts on the subject of greatness in music. Despite the scholarly approach and excellence of the writing, the author's style is delightful and unpretentious. Dr. Einstein refers to this book as reflections on the conditions of greatness in music by one who has been both a musicologist and

a critic. There are four sections: *Questionable Greatness; Unquestionable Greatness; Esoteric Conditions for Greatness; and Historical Conditions for Greatness.*

By and large, most of the book deals with the psychological prerequisites of greatness, and this permits the author to advance some opinions of his own and to refute many current opinions on various composers. He believes there are many composers who are not appreciated for their true worth, and he sets forth the reasons for his belief. There is, in his estimation, a great deal of truly great music which needs only to be "rediscovered".

(Continued on page 158)

*The American Music Lover*



TWELVE

# MOZART SETS

NATHAN BRODER

The flame of Mozart's genius has burned steadily from the time of his death 150 years ago this month to the present. He has never been out of fashion, never undergone even a temporary eclipse; and today the quiet spell of his music is more potent than ever, and draws an always increasing number of listeners within the charmed circle.

The history of music during the last century and a half bears witness to the truth of these assertions. Though musical taste has changed many times, though the attitude of the musical world towards Mozart and his music has altered radically, there has been no diminution in the love engendered by that music. Why is this? Mozart does not storm the heavens, he does not sear the heart. How to account for his enduring appeal?

I do not pretend to know the answer. I know only that the more one learns about music — its form and structure, the manifold elements of its technique — the more one's wonder grows at the creations that poured out of that marvelous brain. It is significant that chief among Mozart's admirers have always been the men with the most intimate knowledge of the technical problems he set himself and solved — men like Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms. Other composers, of the most varied aims and outlook — Chopin and

Sibelius, Mendelssohn and Reger, Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss, Liszt and Stravinsky — have rendered homage of one kind or another to the Salzburg master. They have been joined by the musical critics. The leading critic of one of the New York newspapers once remarked to me in all earnestness that if *Tristan und Isolde*, with the best cast obtainable today, were playing on one side of the street and *Così fan tutte*, with just an adequate cast, on the other, he would unhesitatingly go to the Mozart opera.

These are professional musicians. What about the ordinary music-lover? It is perhaps fairly typical of young people whose ears have but recently been opened to the glories of great music, that they are inclined to be most deeply impressed by brilliantly colored orchestration, lush melodies, poignant harmonies, exotic rhythms; and they are likely to regard Mozart's music as light and often dull. But as their musical experience grows, the spiciness of the early favorites tends to evaporate with frequent hearings, and new and more enduring qualities are found in works that were formerly scarcely heeded. And so the music lover eventually attains to Mozart. The never-cloying richness underlying the apparent simplicity of this music, its purity, its great beauty, the astound-

ing but almost casual mastery of every aspect of the art — these are some of the qualities that contribute, directly or indirectly, to the delight of the experienced concert-goer.

There is something in Mozart for everyone who loves music, so abundant is the variety of his output, so consistently high the quality of its mature portion. Few composers could not learn from the "little clavier sonata for beginners" in C major, and few children would not be enchanted by some parts of *The Magic Flute*.

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No one can accuse the recording companies of having been remiss in their duty towards Mozart and the musical public. (There are over 80 album sets in the Victor catalogue alone.) The task of selecting a mere dozen recordings, therefore, is not an easy one; and to lighten it, it has been found necessary to exclude arbitrarily certain types of records. I shall content myself with saying that everyone who can afford it should have at least one of the complete opera sets — especially *Don Giovanni* or *The Magic Flute* —, and pass on to discuss, in no particular order, some of the instrumental works. Only modern electrical recordings easily available in this country will be considered. This necessary restriction rules out, of course, such discs as those issued by the Mozart Sonata Society in England (Simon Goldberg and Lili Krauss), as well as old recordings, no longer in the domestic catalogues, of otherwise unrecorded compositions. The works selected have been chosen first for their musical value and then for the quality of the recording. An attempt has been made to vary the list as much as possible from the standpoints of form and medium.

#### G Minor Symphony

1) *Symphony in G minor, K. 550*. There are three excellent recordings available, none of them wholly ideal, but one with fewer blemishes than the others. Koussevitzky's version (Victor M-293) is first-rate for three-quarters of the work, but falls down in the first movement, where the main theme is taken somewhat more slowly than the rest. The Beecham set (Columbia M-194) offers a fine perform-

ance and good recording, but the interpretation, in this opinion, is unsatisfactory in certain respects. The difficulty is chiefly a matter of feeling — more specifically, of tempo. The word "daemonic", as applied to Mozart's music, has been somewhat overworked of late, but surely it is applicable to this symphony. Yet this is precisely the quality Beecham does not get. The first movement comes close to it, but the minuet is a bit stodgy and the finale a shade slow. The same stodginess in the treatment of the minuet is apparent in Beecham's recording of the *Jupiter* also. It would almost seem as though the distinguished Britisher regards these movements as intended for dancing. Both Koussevitzky and Beecham, by the way, use the original instrumentation — that is to say, they leave out the clarinets. Toscanini, on the other hand, employs the clarinets, added by Mozart himself, who altered the original oboe parts to accommodate the added instruments. Mozart's second thought, it seems to me, was better than his first, and, while it is good to have both versions, Toscanini's album starts out with at least that advantage. But it is not the only one. Toscanini's reading (Victor M-631) has all the sweep, the emotional intensity, that is only partly present in the other two sets. The tragic passion of the first movement, the melancholy lyricism of the Andante (which is perhaps a bit fast), the lacerating suspensions of the minuet, and the controlled excitement of the finale — all this is fully realized in an overwhelming performance. The customary faults associated with recordings made in Studio 8H of Radio City are only slightly noticeable here — usually when the horns are prominent: their tone is rather dull and unresonant.

2) *Concerto in D minor for Piano and Orchestra, K. 466*. This happens to be my favorite among the piano concertos. But if you say that yours is the *E-flat*, K. 482, or the *A major*, K. 488, or the *C minor*, K. 491, or the *C major*, K. 467, or the *G major*, K. 453, I shall make you a deep and respectful bow. Three recordings exist of the *D minor*. That by Edwin Fischer and the London Philharmonic conducted by Malcolm Sargent (Victor M-

223) is straightforward and competent but not especially distinguished. The smoothest pianism is offered by Iturbi playing with and conducting the Rochester Philharmonic (Victor M-794), but he occasionally indulges in somewhat romantic *ritardandi*, and there is an awkward spot in the last movement, where the wind instruments enter after the cadenza. Iturbi, by the way, is the only one of the three pianists who utilizes Beethoven's cadenzas — a not wholly unmixed blessing. But let us not get off on the vexed subject of cadenzas. Iturbi observes the repeats in the slow movement and consequently requires an extra side; the last side is given over to the *Overture to Così fan tutte*. The most penetrating performance is that of Bruno Walter acting as both soloist and conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic (Victor M-420). His relish for the work is plain and his loving phrasing is a delight to the ear. There is scarcely any trace of the echo that mars some records by this orchestra.

3) *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat for Violin, Viola and Orchestra*, K. 364. This wonderful composition is badly in need of a new recording. The only available version (Columbia M-188, Albert Sammons and Lionel Tertis with the London Symphony under Sir Hamilton Harty) is less than satisfactory both from the mechanical standpoint and as regards the playing by the orchestra.\*

4) *Quintet for Strings in G minor*, K. 516. The last word for this masterpiece is not said either by the Pro Arte version (Victor M-190) or by the Lener (Columbia M-150). The Lener reading is slightly better, and the reproduction in both sets is still adequate despite their age. A first-rate job of performing and recording, however, is needed. Until it comes, perhaps one should choose the *C major Quintet*, K. 515, which is almost as great a work as the *G minor*, and which is available in an excellent set made by the Pro Arte Quartet With Hobday (Victor 270).

5) *Quintet in A for Clarinet and Strings*, K. 581. Neither the Benny Goodman discs (with the Budapest Quartet, Victor

M-452) nor the Simeon Bellison (with the Roth Quartet, Columbia M-293) are notable for richness of nuance. Goodman's tone, in fact, is uniformly flat and dull throughout; Bellison's, on the other hand, is warm and full, but his reading is weakened by poor balance between clarinet and strings, a fault the Victor engineers avoided. Both string groups play well, but the Columbia version suffers from the unfortunate — and quite un-Mozartean — tendency of Mr. Roth to slide. Neither set, then, is satisfactory. I have heard glowing reports about a recording by Charles Draper and the Lener Quartet that was once in the Columbia catalogue, but cannot offer any first-hand information about it; and, in any event, it seems no longer to be procurable through regular channels. Let us hope that the record companies will be enterprising enough to furnish another performance, worthy of this marvelous work.

6) *Quartet in G minor for Piano and Strings*, K. 478. The only version obtainable is that by Schnabel and members of the Pro Arte Quartet (Victor M-251), which is very good. I should like to have been able to recommend a recording of the great *E-flat Piano Quartet*, K. 493, also, but in the only one available, Victor M-438 (Hortense Monath and the Pasquier Trio), the balance between piano and strings is poor. This may possibly have been due to bad microphone placement; whatever the cause, the piano is too much in the background.

7) *Serenade in C minor*, K. 388. This magnificent work should be in the collection of every music lover (Victor M-433). Practically unknown to concert audiences, it represents Mozart at the height of his powers, writing for a medium unusually piquant and colorful — a wind group comprising two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns. The performance, by an ensemble of crack players from the Boston Symphony Orchestra ("Arthur Fiedler's Sinfonietta"), is superb.

8) *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525. The choice here is between the Weingartner set (Columbia X-187) and the Walter (Victor M-364). (The Pro Arte version [Victor M-428] need not be considered

\* A recording of this work is issued by Victor this month. See the review elsewhere in this issue.

here, I think, because the style of the music indicates fairly clearly that it was intended for a string orchestra, not a quintet.) The Walter reading is the warmer, but his set is marred by the excessive reverberation noticeable in some recordings made by the Vienna Philharmonic. It is for this reason that the Columbia album is recommended, though Weingartner's crisp performance is not free of small blemishes — the obvious repetition, *pianissimo*, of a phrase first played *piano*, for example, or the treatment of the grace note in the fourth measure of the minuet as short.

9) *String Quartet in D minor, K. 421.* The only recording of this quartet worth serious consideration is that by the Budapest (Columbia M-462). This is a splendid job, except for one thing. The tempo of the first movement seems to me to be too slow. In most editions of the parts the movement is marked "Allegro moderato". This is the marking Mozart had originally, but in his manuscript of the score the "moderato" is heavily stricken out. Whether this was done by the composer himself or by another hand, the faster tempo seems to be more in keeping with the true character of the music. If you prefer the great *C major Quartet, K. 465*, there is a fine set by the Budapests (Victor M-285) and a fair one by the Kolisches (Columbia M-439). Unfortunately, in the former, twelve measures are cut out of the finale; and in the slow movement the Budapests help to perpetuate an error that appears in all printed editions except the first. There is a wonderful passage in imitation here, where the subject, according to Mozart's manuscript and the first edition, appears first in the viola, then in the second violin, then in the first violin. It was probably some early editor who had the bright idea of giving this subject to the first violin a measure before the viola's entrance, and so it is played by practically everyone — except the Kolisches. Unexceptionable is the Budapest version of the *Quartet in B-flat, K. 458* (Victor M-763). The other three quartets of the six dedicated to Haydn are available in modern recordings, but the performances are not as good as those in

the albums mentioned.

10) *Trio in G major, K. 564.* A fair interpretation by Mme. Lang and Messrs. Kagi and Hindermann (Columbia X-81). There are greater trios by Mozart — the *E major (K. 542)*, for example —, but this is a field that has been neglected by the domestic record companies. The set named is the only one in the catalogues of both the major companies. Musicraft has issued the *E major* and the *C major (K. 548)* (Album No. 29) but these records are unsatisfactory on several counts. The field, therefore, remains wide open.

11) *Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano, K. 526.* A delightfully fresh reading by Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin, and acceptable reproduction (Victor 8442-3). Two other great violin sonatas are available in fine interpretations well recorded — the *E minor, K. 304* (Szigeti and Magaloff, Columbia 69005D), and the *F major, K. 377* (Busch and Serkin, Victor 15175/6).

12) *Piano Sonata in C minor, K. 457.* An excellent performance by Giesecking and good recording (Columbia X-93). Unfortunately Giesecking (or Columbia) did not see fit to preface this sonata with the fine *Fantasy* in the same key (K. 475), which Mozart himself coupled with the sonata. Another of the more important piano sonatas — that in D, K. 576 — may be had in an equally good version by Casadesus (in Columbia M-433, with the *Sonata in F, K. 332*).

Well, there are twelve; and we haven't mentioned the overtures, the violin concertos, the *String Trio in E-flat*, the *Quintet* for piano and winds, the *Adagio and Fugue for Strings*, the *D major Sonata* for two pianos, the *F minor Fantasy* (for a mechanism in a clock), the *Sonata in F* for piano, four hands, or the *A minor Rondo* for piano, not to speak of still other compositions for the instrumental combinations we have mentioned. But anyone who acquires the bulk of those works recommended will be making at least a good start towards a representative collection of Mozart masterpieces.

\* A recording of the *Sonata in D* is issued by Victor this month. See the review elsewhere in this issue.



# TONAL REALISM

## WHY RECORDS SOUND BEST PLAYED LOUDLY

In his research that led to the development of an electronic piano, Laurens Hammond had occasion to make a comprehensive analysis of the nature of piano tone. Included was a study of the effect produced when the keys are struck with different intensities. While his observations were confined to the piano, it seems by analogy that similar phenomena are present in other instruments in which the sound is produced by vibrating strings or by cords — that is, in any stringed instrument or the human voice.

Hammond observed that when a piano key is struck softly the energy emitted by the vibrating string is composed largely of the fundamental and that the energy content of harmonics or overtones<sup>1</sup> is relatively low. However, when the piano is struck a hard blow, not only is there

an increase in the loudness of the tone, but there is a difference in harmonic content. More particularly, in the case of the loud note, a larger proportion of the energy is contained in the harmonics and a smaller proportion is contained in the fundamental.

Through adherence to certain habits of listening we have perhaps unconsciously failed to realize that a loud note of a stringed instrument not only is one in which the wave form has a large amplitude, but also one in which there is a large proportion of harmonics.

The observations of the listener will confirm this. The violin, when played very softly, emits a "pure" tone because the sound is primarily the fundamental. As the intensity is increased, the "brightness" of the tone also is increased, not only because the sound becomes louder, but because there are more harmonics in proportion to the fundamental. This may go so far as to produce an unpleasingly loud sound, sometimes characterized as "harsh", because too large a proportion of the energy is in the harmonics to be pleasing to the ear.

The listener may recall the same phenomenon in singing. Many people can

<sup>1</sup> Harmonics are notes with frequencies such as 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. times the frequency of the fundamental. Thus if the frequency of middle C is 256 cps., the first harmonic of middle C has a frequency of 512; the second harmonic a frequency of 768; the third harmonic, 1024. Briefly stated, notes whose frequencies are  $2N$ ,  $3N$ ,  $4N$ , etc., are called the harmonics of the note whose frequency is  $N$ , and the latter is called the fundamental of the harmonics.

There is a difference between the terms harmonic and overtone. Harmonic refers to notes made by a particular frequency irrespective of how they are produced. Overtone refers to notes made by a particular instrument. In some instruments the overtones are not harmonics of the fundamental. In stringed instruments, however, the overtones are the same as harmonics.

sing a sweet, beautiful tone if they sing softly. In fact, this has made many so-called singers a success at the microphone who would never have been heard had they been compelled to sing loudly enough to be heard by the power of their own voice. These people, when they sing more loudly, often produce a strident, unpleasant sound and this too can be explained as a result of the high harmonic content of such loud sounds. It is only the successfully trained singer who can sing loudly and still sing a relatively pure note or one in which the harmonic content is not of such a nature or an amount as to be unpleasant. In the case of the voice it is possible by training to learn how to control not only the loudness but also the harmonic content. In the case of piano or other string instruments there is no such possibility of control over the way the string vibrates, and the harmonic content changes automatically with a change in loudness.

#### Theoretical Applications

This brings us to a consideration of the pertinency such observations may have on the recording or reproduction of music via the phonograph. An example will illustrate their appositeness. Suppose a note in the middle range of the piano, when played *piano*, has a harmonic content of 15%. When played *forte* assume it has a harmonic content of 50%. These figures are arbitrary for illustrative purposes. If the pianist in the recording studio plays this note *forte*, the sound emitted from the string will have a wave form of such nature that 50% of the energy is contained in the harmonics. The wave form engraved on the record groove is identical with that produced by the string (if there is no distortion or electrical modification in recording process) i. e., the undulations in the groove will be half harmonics and half fundamental. When this record is played on the phonograph the energy emitted by the loud-speaker for this note will be 50% harmonics and 50% fundamental, irrespective of volume. Suppose the listener has a small apartment, and easily-annoyed neighbors, and he does not want to hear the note from the loud-

speaker as loudly as it was played by the recording pianist; he turns down the volume control so that the note is emitted from the loud-speaker as *piano*. But in this process, the volumes of *both* the fundamental and the harmonics are lowered in the same ratio to each other. That is, even though the *forte* note is now reproduced *piano*, the harmonic content is nevertheless 50%, whereas for a *piano* note it should be 15%. The volume control only adjusts loudness. It does not alter harmonic content. The music does not sound right when we turn down the volume control because we are listening to music with a higher harmonic content at the lower volume level than is produced by the original instrument at that lower volume.

This explains why so many people play their phonographs and radios loudly; it is simply because these instruments sound better or more natural when they are played to reproduce the music at the volume produced by the original instrument that was recorded.

#### On Tonal Monitoring

Nor does the recording engineer's "monitoring" have any effect. If the recording engineer lowers the volume that is recorded, he is doing just what the listener does with his volume control. The monitoring does not alter or lower the relative harmonic content of a loud note.

Another consideration will explain an observation common to all phonophiles. If we stand beside a piano when the note is struck *forte* we hear it in its full loudness and also with its 50% harmonic content. If, however, we listen to it at a distance, we do not hear the note so loudly because its intensity has diminished in traveling the distance, but we still hear the same relationship between harmonic and fundamental.<sup>1</sup> You may recall many people complaining that when the volume control of the phonograph is turned down, the music sounds far away or "masked". The reason for this is that the

<sup>1</sup> This ignores the possibility that the higher frequencies diminish in intensity to a greater extent than lower frequencies in traveling a long distance, and also that the higher frequencies are less prominent because they are absorbed and not reflected as much as the lower frequencies if the listening at a distance is done in the rear of a large hall.

harmonic content they are hearing at a low volume is that which they would hear if they were listening to music loudly played but heard at a distance. As you turn up the volume control not only does the music become louder, but it seems to become nearer, simply because the unalterable harmonic content at that higher volume is that which through experience the listener has associated with nearness.

How can this difficulty be solved? One solution is to play the phonograph at such a volume that the sound emitted from the loud-speaker is just as loud as that of the original instrument that was recorded. But many people who live in small apartments or homes cannot play their radio to produce a sound as loud as would be produced by a concert pianist playing a grand piano in the center of the stage of Carnegie Hall.

Similarly, many people would not care to have Traubel's or Martinelli's voice issuing from their loud-speaker with the same intensity with which such singers project it into the auditorium of Carnegie Hall or the Metropolitan Opera.

#### A Possible Solution

The ideal solution would seem, therefore, in making records to be used in the home, for a recording artist to play or sing with the same scale of dynamics as he would select if he were actually playing or singing in the average room of a home.

I am told that most musicians do not like to adjust their scale of dynamics in this way; that they cannot do justice to their art or something like that. But I believe that if some Metropolitan singers were to spend the evening singing in your apartment for your pleasure, they would not sing, if it were within their power, as loudly as they do on the stage of the Metropolitan. If they did, it is quite possible that some hostesses would not invite them again.

Any objection to the way records are made is probably not chargeable to the recording companies. In general, they have no control over the manner in which the artist plays or sings, and in many cases I imagine that suggestions by engineers would not be received favorably

by musicians. Some artists have learned "microphone technique" either by instruction or experience. In other instances the recording company probably puts on wax what the artist puts out, and the phonophile is then left with the problem of trying to make it sound like something in his home.

The above considerations may explain some of the criticisms that have been levelled against records. You will recall that all the early Flagstad recordings were criticized on the ground that the recordings did not sound like her. Reviewers commented that the phonograph had not faithfully captured her voice. Is it not likely that in these recordings Flagstad was singing as loudly as she does from the Metropolitan stage, and that when you reduce the volume so as to play these records in your home, you are simply not able to reconcile the harmonic content of Flagstad's voice, as it is known on the stage, with the way it sounds when it is heard at lower volume.

Perhaps this phenomenon explains why some lieder singers, and people who sing in a more intimate style, such as Maggie Teyte, fare better on the phonograph. Perhaps also this explains why chamber music and string quartets are generally captured and reproduced with the more faithfulness than a symphonic orchestra.

#### A Difficult Problem

The problem at best is difficult. What we aim to do is to have a "miniature" of the symphony orchestra. We want to play it softly enough so that a 100-piece orchestra playing *forte* will not sound too loud in our living room, but will yet sound the way an orchestra sounds when it actually plays *forte*. There is probably no ideal solution, and the good results secured in many records indicate that engineers have done a lot when we consider the difficulties in the problem with which they are confronted.

There are too many technicians, however, who want to *improve* on music; to make it sound better than the original. That is one of our difficulties today in many records. If this analysis is correct it would seem that there is no justification for the all too common practice of some

recording companies who "peak" the highs in recording.

The records in the catalogue have already been made, and, whether good or bad, they are those from which the phonophile must choose. Can the phonophile do anything to improve the way many records sound? Perhaps he can, if his machine is provided with sufficiently flexible tone controls and if he is willing to use them intelligently.

Some authorities have urged that as the volume is decreased, the treble tone control should be adjusted to increase highs because the ear is less sensitive to high frequencies at low volume. But if the ear does not hear high frequencies at low volume in music that it hears from the original instrument, why should it want to hear them in phonograph music?

Since the harmonics are higher frequencies than the fundamental, and if it is desirable to reduce the harmonic content with a reduction in volume, it is suggested that the treble tone control might be adjusted to reduce the highs. This also helps in the reduction of needle scratch.

No rules can be laid down, and the writer urges, as has the editor, that you

experiment and attempt to adjust the controls of your phonograph to achieve the best reproduction.

An ideal tone control system should not only adjust the amount by which the high frequencies are diminished or raised, but should also have some adjustment by which high frequencies of different pitch can be lowered or raised. For example, in some records it may be desirable to start reducing high frequencies at 2000 cycles per second and above in order to adjust overtones for a given volume level; in another case it might be 4000 cycles per second. Such an instrument would in effect have two treble controls, one controlling the amount by which the high frequencies were reduced and the other controlling the point in high frequency scale at which the reduction takes place. Most manufacturers would say such an instrument is too complicated, and in fact many listeners would probably not display the intelligence or devote the care that would be necessary to obtain the proper adjustment. But for the connoisseur there is the definite possibility of obtaining entirely satisfactory results from almost any record.

## BOOK REVIEW

### MUSIC IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION.

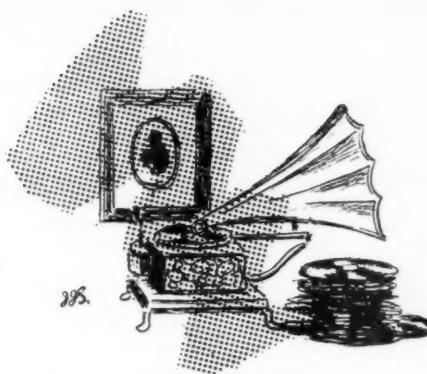
By Paul Henry Lang. W. W. Norton & Co., New York. 1107 pp. Price \$5.00.

This book grew out of the author's lectures at Columbia University, where he is an associate professor of music, and where, we understand, it is now being used as a textbook. In his preface, Professor Lang tells us: "In writing this history of music, I have addressed myself to those lovers of music who combine enjoyment of their art with a curiosity as to all that goes to form a part of their intellectual estate. The reader must not expect a technical or biographical essay, for this is a chronicle of the participation of music in the making of western civilization." Although Prof. Lang's thesis

closely parallels that of McKinney and Anderson in their valuable *Music In History*, his style and realization of purpose are quite different. In the first place Lang's approach to his subject is more intellectual and far more critical; he is by no means that all-around friend of music that McKinney and Anderson are. His dislike for Tchaikovsky is hardly entirely shared by most writers, and his jibe at America's "deification" of Sibelius will surprise not a few. He seems unaware that England shares our admiration, and to some extent has gone us one better.

As admirable and as excellently written as this treatise on music is, it is by no means conclusive. There are phases of musical history in which the author is far from being fully elucidative, and others

(Continued on page 158)



28.

## RECORD

# COLLECTOR'S

## CORNER

*Pursuing his survey of the recordings issued during the corresponding quarter thirty-five years ago, Mr. Moses here discusses those that came out during October, November, and December, 1906.*

—Ed.

What vocal glory the year 1906 could boast! Many interesting releases by both of the major record companies marked the passing of the year. First of all, Columbia took full advantage of its contract with the renowned David Bispham, then the leading American baritone. During this period he was presented in selections far worthier of his fine artistry and musicianship than had been done previously. Three songs of Schubert, in whose lieder he was particularly expressive, were issued on Columbia records Nos. 30018, 19 and 20. These were respectively *Der Wanderer*, *Der Erlkönig*, and *Who Is Sylvia?* All were genuinely excellent and, since the piano tone came through with greater fidelity than even the abbreviated "full" orchestras of the period, the recordings stand up very well alongside of present-day efforts.

Bispham also sang Crouch's *Kathleen*

*Mavourneen* (No. 30036), and the baritone aria from *Faust* in its common Italian version, *Dio possente* (No. 30037). The latter was soon to be coupled with Arimondi's sonorous rendition of Mephistophele's *Serenade* on record No. A 5010. This last disc is in my estimation one of the "musts" in all sizable collections of so-called historical records.

Other Columbia artists to be featured during the last quarter of 1906 were Gina Ciaparelli, the soprano, and Taurino Parvis, the baritone. Several of their Italian recordings, made in Milan, as well as their solo work made in this country, had previously entered the catalogue, but here the singers were joined in a series of duets which included many of the better known scenes for soprano and baritone from Italian opera. Among these were the duets *La ci darem la mano* from *Don Giovanni* (No. 30030), *Da quel di* from *Ernani* (No. 30032), *Rivedrai le foreste* from *Aida* (No. 30033), *Sei la?* from *Pagliacci* (No. 30035), and *Mira d'acerbe* and *Vivra contento* from *Trovatore* (Nos. 3524/5). The voices blended well and the singing was in the best tradition, al-

though on the old horn machines these records did not reproduce as well as they might have. Of the two singers, Parvis enjoyed a greater reputation in his native Italy, while Ciaparelli, who sang at the Metropolitan from 1907 to 1910, made more of a name for herself in this country. She later made records for Victor under the name of Viafona. Parvis sounded much like Scotti on records and his records deservedly hold interest for collectors.

#### An Opera Set

Featured on Victor's lists for the last quarter of 1906 was a "complete" performance of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* on fourteen 10-inch and four 12-inch records. These were single-faced discs recorded in Milan and re-pressed here for the first time under Grand Prize labels with the usual Angel backs denoting imports. Their original numbers, to be changed many times later, were 61153 through 66 and 71028 through 31. Perhaps it is only fair to point out that most Italian records of this period because of their tendency to blast, did not reproduce as well on all horn machines as did domestic recordings; and many singers who had large European reputations, heard on Italian records made at that time, are not represented as effectively or faithfully as we would have liked. How these records sounded to European ears we have no way of knowing, but it may well be that the Italian recordings enjoyed as great a prestige in their native land as some of our own products did at a later date.

That this recording of *Trovatore* was not a unified performance can be seen from the fact that it took no less than sixteen singers to finish the music that Verdi had written for five principals. The following La Scala artists participated:

Leonora—Bernacchi, Crestani, Giacometti, De Angelis.

Azucena—Esposito, Mameli, Mileri.

Manrico—Colazza, Malessi, Martinez-Patti, Valls.

Di Luna—Caronna, Cigada, Minolfi. Ferrando—De Luna, Preve.

What apparently had been done was to combine in one set recordings of the various arias and concerted pieces that had been made during the previous two years. This, of course, made for a very mixed standard of singing artistry, some of it being of a high order, and an unusual diversiy of intepretation. The only unifying force is the conductor, who in most cases was, believe it or not, Carlo Sabajno. To this one can only add he must have loved opera.

Another novelty in the Victor lists was the first appearance under its label of Elda Cavalieri, whose debut had been effected with none other than Tamagno and Maurel, and who had just returned from a successful tour of South America. It was in fact in that continent that most of her records, made in Camden, were first released and later coupled on blue seal discs. In all, her recording session in this country netted some 26 Grand Prize items for collectors to hunt for, probably in vain. Should they be lucky enough to find one of these Italian or Spanish compositions, they will discover a voice that is perhaps the nearest thing to Boninsegna on records, which is sufficient praise.

Finally, for its usual run of Real Seal selections, Victor brought forth a beautiful Italian song by Scuderi called *Dormi pure* sung by Emilio De Gogorza with his customary beauty of tone (No. 74047). There were also four contralto pieces from the standard operatic repertoire, in which Louise Homer shone even in her day. These were *Stride la vampa* from *Il Trovatore* (No. 81084), *Voce di donna* from *La Gioconda* (No. 85104), *Esser mesto* from *Martha* (No. 85105), and *Quando lieta* from *Faust* (No. 85106).

—Julian Morton Moses





## RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

*It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the reader is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.*

### Orchestra

**CHADWICK:** *Noël, No. 2 of Symphonic Sketches*; played by the National Symphony Orchestra, direction of Hans Kindler. Victor disc 18274, price \$1.00.

▲ Chadwick's *Symphonic Sketches* have long occupied a conspicuous place in the orchestral repertoire in this country. It is the composer's most popular orchestral work. There are four movements: *Jubilee* (which has already been recorded by Hanson), *Noël*, *Hobgoblin*, and *A Vagrom Ballad*.

*Noël* is, of course, a Christmas song. It is a nocturne built on a theme which is first imparted by the English horn. The marking on the score is *Andante con tenerezza*, the key D flat. Prefacing the music is the following poem:

Through the soft calm moonlight comes  
a sound:  
A mother lulls her babe and all  
around

The gentle snow lies glistening;  
On such a night the Virgin mother  
mild  
In dreamless slumber wrapped the holy  
child,  
While angel hosts were listening.

The music is simply constructed and  
grateful to the ears. Its early pages are  
calm, but the composer builds a rich,  
full-voiced climax in the latter part of the  
score. Kindler plays it with fine expres-  
sion and complete sympathy, and the re-  
cording is excellently realized. —P. G.

**GOUNOD:** *Faust Ballet Music*; played by the Boston 'Pops' Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 13830.

**STRAUSS:** *Emperor Waltz*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction of Eugene Ormandy. Victor disc 18220. Price, special for both, \$1.00.

▲ This is a Victor special two-for-the-  
price-of-one, recently featured across the  
country. Both records are well recorded  
and played and are decidedly worth acquir-  
ing at the special price, which is shortly  
to be changed, if it has not been already.  
Fiedler gives a good, straightforward  
account of the ballet music from *Faust*,  
which after all does not need any special  
interpreting. The *Emperor Waltz* finds  
Ormandy in fine fettle. In a way this disc  
is a lamentable duplication, for Victor

only a couple of months back issued a particularly ingratiating interpretation of this waltz by Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (set M-805), and, since the present disc can be bought for less, the Walter may be ignored by many who might well prefer it if they had to make comparisons before buying as they would in the case of ordinary single disc purchases. It is not that Ormandy does not do justice to the music, but that Walter's treatment of the sentiment is less obvious.

—P. G.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, direction of Pierre Monteux. Victor set M-840, five discs, price \$5.50.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set M-479, five discs, price \$5.50.

▲ At the outset let me say I believe that Monteux is closer to the Franckian spirit than Sir Thomas. The noted English conductor gives a beautifully lyrical performance but one in which the dramatic substance of the score is decidedly understated.

There are a half-dozen performances of this work on records within the buying range of the record public. Each of these would seem to have its adherents. Besides the two above, there is the Stokowski-Philadelphia Orchestra version, the more recent Mitropoulos-Minneapolis Symphony performance, and the two older sets made for Columbia and Polydor respectively by Gaubert and Albert Wolf. The two latter should be dismissed because both are old recordings.

It is quite apparent that what Sir Thomas aims to do is avoid any stress of Franck's emotional overelaboration. But in endeavoring to perform this music in the manner of a Mozart symphony, the eminent English conductor errs. As our reviewer of the Mitropoulos set noted, there is plenty of the purple and gold in Franck, the type of musical substance that is indicative of an incipient decadence in the art. But understatement of this substance does no more justice to the composer than overstatement of it.

The first diminishes the tonal coloring and the glow of the score, the latter applies a Herodian splendor and sensuousness which soon become obnoxious. Stokowski is guilty of the latter treatment of the music, and although there is undeniably fine tonal solidity as well as incisiveness in his performance, there is also much unorthodox treatment of phrasing and detail.

Musical listeners who admire this score will find, if they wish to make comparisons between the different sets, how widely divergent the approach of conductors can be toward a work of this kind. Admirers of Sir Thomas are advised to hear his performance and Monteux's before buying. It is difficult sometimes to believe that one's favorite conductor can let one down. The playing in the Beecham set is eminently musically, the cleanliness and clarity of line and the beautiful pianissimi are representative of Sir Thomas' unusual orchestral gifts. But the avoidance of sentiment and of contrast, and above all the understatement of the drama in the first and last movements are an injustice to Franck's intentions. Beecham's best work is to be found in the slow movement, which even though more subdued than we usually hear is admirable for its clear and singing qualities. I cannot say I like all the breaks Sir Thomas has accepted in his recording; that at the end of side 2 is particularly annoying.

The Mitropoulos performance is full of spectacular contrasts, and it is far too taut and insistently precise for its own good. And so, at long last, we come to the Monteux version. He alone seems to realize that there are both lyricism and drama in this work, and that the Franckian contrast and emotional extravagance must be fully evidenced but not exaggerated. The "swells" and crescendi, which Beecham fails to observe fully and which Stokowski overdoes, are treated with a fine musically approach. Working with a far less distinguished orchestral body than either Stokowski or Beecham, he is able to bring us the most persuasive realization of this symphony yet to be recorded. And, with one exception (the end of side 9), there is a far better and more

musicianly selection of breaks in his recording. As for the reproduction, this is both a realistic and a just tonal response without exaggeration either of volume or of highs. Save for one or two poor surfaces the set is unusually smooth in its needle tracking.

—P. H. R.

GLIERE: *Symphony No. 3 in B minor* (*Ilya Mourometz*), Op. 42 (11 sides); and CHOPIN (arr. Stokowski): *Mazurka in B flat minor* (1 side); played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Victor set M-841, price \$6.50.

▲ This is quite an ambitious symphony. It was composed in 1911, at which time the pure nationalism indoctrinated by the Russian "Five" was being disturbed by outside influences. While there could be nothing more Russian than the tale upon which this work is based, the music itself is more or less cosmopolitan. That there are long stretches of undoubtedly Slavic character does not alter the case, for one feels that Glière did not, in 1911 at any rate, think in terms of the music of his people as Moussorgsky and Borodin did. When these two composed, their music was impregnated with the Russian spirit, even though there may have been some imitation of foreign contemporaries. Of course Glière, being a Russian, could not entirely escape the Slavic spirit, but thematically there is evidence that his outlook was in sympathy with the late romantics, and their techniques and philosophies came easily to him.

Ilya of Mourom (*Ilya Mourometz*) is Russia's mythical hero, comparable to Siegfried, Theseus, Sir Launcelot, or Hercules. A large group of legends deal with his exploits, and the booklet that comes with the album provides those that Glière used for the programmatic background of his score. Although called a symphony, this work really is a symphonic poem in four movements. The form is loose, there is much padding and repetition, and despite some cuts the symphony stretches to a wearisome length. A good example of this length occurs in the second movement, where Glière tries to

create another *Waldweben*. After a while the twittering flutes and glissandos become boring; used briefly, the pictorial effect would have been excellent; repetitious as it is, it fails as music. For, program or no, it is as music that the work must be judged, and, as Huneker once wrote, "the fact of a piece of music being 'programme' or not makes it neither better or worse. It is exactly the same in painting, where the subject of the picture, which is everything to the vulgar mind, is nothing or little to the artist."

Judging *Ilya Mourometz* purely as music, I would say that it is almost first-rate. The music has everything but pronounced individuality. It is brilliantly orchestrated, and by its very size, length, and drama it achieves a quality close to the epic. But after several hearings one senses a certain artificiality and not a little decadence. It reminds me of a work like Mahler's first symphony; after the novelty of the climaxes wear off, one is inclined to shrug one's shoulders. There also is a lack of concentrated musical ideas beneath the elaborate tissue, and reminiscences aplenty of Liszt, Wagner, Moussorgsky, Rimsky, and Strauss. To balance the defects, not even the obvious treatment of the program can hide the native strength of many sections and the—lush, to be sure—beauty of several themes that crop up again and again. A work like this cannot be dismissed lightly, and despite the critical objections outlined above, I shall listen to it with interest many times in the future.

Stokowski's showy transcription of the Chopin *B flat minor Mazurka* (mislabelled *B minor*) is a curious filler for this set. I would guess that it and the Glière were recorded several years ago, for they have some of the characteristics of that recording period. Some of the highs are fuzzy, the fortissimos are too loud in comparison to the soft passages, and one does not find the clarity and definition of recent Philadelphia Orchestra releases. There was a mistake in the pressing of the review set: side 4 unexpectedly burst into the last half of the first movement of Beethoven's first Rasoumowsky quartet.

—H. C. S.

**GRIEG:** *Sigurd Jorsalfar* — *Prelude and Intermezzo* (*Borghild's Dream*); played by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, direction of Fabien Sevitzky. Victor disc 18291, price \$1.00.

▲ Following the success of his incidental music to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Grieg was commissioned to write the incidental music for the eminent Norwegian poet's drama *Sigurd Jorsalfar*. The score contains orchestral selections as well as some songs. Three pieces have been drawn together as a concert suite—the two above and the *Homage March*. The latter is by far the best of the three.

Grieg was by no means as successful in this music as he was in his score of *Peer Gynt*. Both of the above pieces are far too episodic and disjointed. The *Intermezzo* starts out with an atmospheric quality which offered many possibilities for interesting development, but the composer saw fit to break this off and introduce some melodramatic material of little consequence. The *Prelude* holds together better, but even here one may find that interest lags.

Sevitzky gives rather stiff performances, which may or may not be the fault of the composer.

—P. G.

**MEYERBEER:** *Coronation March* from *The Prophet* and **BERLIOZ:** *Hungarian March* from *The Damnation of Faust*; played by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony, direction of Howard Barlow. Columbia disc 71287, price \$1.00.

▲ If anybody has asked us (but nobody did), we would have said that these were needless duplications in the Columbia catalogue. Granted that Godfrey's performance of the *Coronation March* dates back a few years, but it surely sufficed. Beecham's performance of the *Hungarian March*, however, was quite recent, and it still remains the most artistic substantiation of this music we ever heard. Of course, Barlow does justice to both pieces, for he is at all times a reliable conductor. As for recording, the Beecham job is greatly preferable, to our way of thinking, but this one is up to the standard set by Barlow's recent recordings.

—P. G.

**MOZART:** *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major*, K. 364; played by Albert Spalding (violin), William Primrose (viola), and the New Friends of Music Orchestra, direction of Fritz Stiedry (7 sides); and **HANDEL:** *Adagio* from *Sonata in E major, Op. 2, No. 8*; played by Albert Spalding, William Primrose, and Andre Benoit (piano) (1 side). Victor set M-838, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Out of a crucial period of Mozart's creative career came this wonderful work. It was written in Salzburg after his return from Paris in 1779. Eric Blom marks E flat as one of Mozart's lucky keys, and he says that of all the works of 1779 this one and the two-piano concerto (K. 365) own truly enduring qualities; but more particularly the *Sinfonia Concertante*, "a beautiful, dark-colored work in which a passion not at all suited to an archiepiscopal court, and perhaps disclosing active revolt against it, seems to shudder under a perfectly decorous style and exquisite proportions."

No Mozart enthusiast should miss this music, and indeed no musical listener should forego the privilege of owning a set of this work. It ranks with the best of the symphonies and concertos from his so-called second period (1779-1786); and although one may seem readily to grasp its melodic content and substance upon a first hearing, it nevertheless grows more meaningful and expressive upon subsequent hearings. Too many listeners approach Mozart with the belief that what he has to offer can be fully absorbed in a first hearing. How wrong this is would seem to be attested to by all who at our instigation have acquired recordings of many works which they assure us have proved endless sources of great enjoyment.

Nearly a decade ago the late Sir Hamilton Harty and the Halle Orchestra (then one of the foremost ensembles in England), with the eminent English artists Albert Sammons and Lionel Tertis, recorded this work for Columbia. For many of us this has been one of the most treasured of all Mozart recordings. Now at long last comes a modern recording of this work, played not only with equally

persuasive artistry, but in many ways in a manner that better substantiates the composer's intentions. There may be some who will question the slightly faster tempo adopted by Stiedry for the first movement, which is marked *Allegro Maestoso*. But it seems to me that Stiedry's pace allows for a buoyancy that was missing from Harty's performance. There are points to criticize, if one wishes to be captious, in both conductors' approach to the orchestral section of this score. Thus we find Stiedry often subduing the orchestra for the sake of the soloists to the extent that instrumental details in the *tutti* are needlessly lost. Again, although the horn playing, which was often so ineffective in the Harty performance, is definitely finer in the Stiedry set, the oboes on the other hand are strangely lost on more than one occasion. Mozart used only two oboes and two horns in his scoring (the more or less standard instrumentation of the orchestral works Mozart wrote for Salzburg), but he made the most of these instruments. In the first movement the oboes and horns are often used ingeniously in a conversational manner. It is therefore somewhat unfortunate that the oboe replies are not heard to better advantage. But, in the face of a really fine performance of the music, this is probably a point that few will criticize.

The soloists of the newer recording emerge with signal honors. Spalding has never in my estimation accomplished a more wholly admirable job on records, and Primrose is in fine form. It is not that Sammons' tone was less expressive, but that the recording of the period did not do for him what, from a standpoint of tonal coloring, modern recording does for Spalding. As for Tertis, one of the greatest violists of our age, his tone was less mellow than Primrose's. And it must be admitted that the tonal blend of Spalding and Primrose emerges more smoothly and satisfactorily from the record. Their playing of the cadenza in the first, and especially in the slow movement is firmer and better knit than that of their predecessors. And there is evidence of better preparation in the whole performance of Stiedry and his soloists than in Harty's.

The Handelian excerpt, from one of the trio-sonatas (for two oboes or two violins, or oboe, violin and figured bass), is set forth with admirably expressive artistry. One suspects its tonal texture is much enriched by the combination of violin and viola rather than two violins.

Save for some annoying ticks on side 5, the surfaces here are consistently good.

—P. H. R.

**SCHUMANN:** *Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120*; played by the London Symphony Orchestra, direction of Bruno Walter. Victor set M-837, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ We mentioned the fact last month that Walter had recorded this work in 1939 with the Vienna Philharmonic. We were right about the date but wrong about the orchestra. This was the first of a number of recordings that Walter made for H.M.V. after coming to London the year the war broke out.

Over a decade ago Walter made this work for Columbia in Austria with the Mozart Festival Orchestra. His older performance has been, by and large, the criterion by which most critics judged later performances. Ormandy had the benefit of better recording, but despite his intensification of contrasts is not as close to the romantic spirit of Schumann as Walter. The present set can be placed beside the recent performance by Walter of the *Rhenish Symphony*. Both are eminently satisfactory interpretations.

The constant duplication of recorded works today seems to be on the way to proving a nuisance to a great number of listeners, as our correspondence tends to show. This month we are faced not only with two recordings of the Franck symphony but with a duplication of the Schumann, hard on the heels of the Stock-Chicago Symphony performance issued last month. Those who have not purchased the Stock set yet will find that Walter's performance is a far more imposing substantiation of the composer's speech. Stock has long been admired for his performances of the Schumann symphonies, and while he evinces a sympathetic insight into their idiom one notes

his more restrained approach to the music. Undeniably there is a depth and glow to his reading of the *Fourth*, but one does not find in it quite the same intensification of drama or rhythmic affirmation that is discernable in the Walter version. Too, the instrumental balance in the recording here is better than it is in the Stock set; the horn passages in the first movement for example, are lost in the playing of the strings. Indeed, in the over-all playing of the two orchestras the advantage seems to be on the side of the London Symphony.

As a recording this set is an imposing representation of the English engineers' handling of a major symphony orchestra.

—P. H. R.

**SMETANA:** *The Moldau (Vltava)*, No. 2 of *My Fatherland*, Cycle of six symphonic poems (3 sides); and **DVORAK:** *Slavonic Dance No. 1 in C major, Op. 46, No. 1*; played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Bruno Walter. Columbia set X-211, price \$2.50.

▲ Talich recorded all six of the tone poems, of which this work is the second, about seven years ago. It has always been a source of wonderment for some of us that Victor did not see fit to re-press these recordings in this country. But then Smetana was the minstrel of his own people, and there was not the interest in Bohemia at that time that there is today. A couple of years back Victor brought forward the recordings of *Moldau* and *From Bohemia's Fields and Groves* (No. 4 of the cycle), made by Rafael Kubelik and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Although the recording was superior to that in the earlier issue of Talich, the interpretations were hardly on a par. Kubelik, son of the famous violinist, did not achieve the elasticity or grace of the Talich performances. The national qualities of these scores make them harder to interpret successfully than most classical symphonies. The most sympathetic and full-throated interpretation of *The Moldau* issued, prior to the present version, was one that the late Eduard Mörike made back in the

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later 'twenties. He had a fine feeling for the music of both Smetana and Dvorak.

Walter gives us the all-around best performance of this work on records to date; here is a performance rich in tonal coloring and fervently songful. And the recording is splendidly achieved. Indeed, the quality of this recording suggests an advance on that obtained in the recent ones of the *Eroica* and the Schumann *Third*.

Duplications lately must seem as strange as they are annoying to some people. Last month Columbia issued the first *Slavonic Dance*, played by Mitropoulos and the Minneapolis Symphony. Now we have a duplicate by Walter. Whereas Mitropoulos was crisp and cold in his approach to this music, Walter is warm and fluent. One has the feeling that Mitropoulos regarded this composition from the distant heights of his native Greece, while Walter saw it through more sympathetic eyes. However, it still seems to me that Talich has said about the last word on these dances, at least on records. But at the same time this recording is a welcome encore for the fine performance of the Smetana tone poem. It would be nice if Columbia saw fit to let Walter conduct one or two others of the Smetana cycle.

—P. H. R.

**STRAUSS: Music of Johann Strauss:** *Blue Danube; Tales from the Vienna Woods* (disc 7391-M); *Artist's Life; Voices of Spring* (disc 7392-M); *Emperor; Vienna Life* (disc 7393-M); played by André Kostelanetz and his Orchestra. Columbia set M-481, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ It is a set like this that makes a reviewer's life not a happy one, and leads him to gloomy reflections. There must be a demand for this sort of thing, else Columbia would not have released it. But all it does is illustrate the trend toward quantity rather than quality: three discs, six waltzes. That they are not played in the Strauss tradition seems not to be of great moment, for the emphasis is evidently not on the music but on André Kostelanetz and his Orchestra. One might pass over this exhibition of bad taste were it not for the dangers inherent in

the procedure. There is obviously no limit to which the uncurbed arranger would not go.

—H. C. S.

SCHAUER: *Till Eulenspiegel's Lustige Streiche*; played by the Cleveland Orchestra, direction of Artur Rodzinski. Columbia set X-210, two discs, \$2.50

▲ As a recording this set is on a par with the same conductor's version of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. The intricate score is set forth with amazing technical resourcefulness, and with a far better and more equitable balance than was apparent in the Cleveland's recent recording of Shostakovich's *First Symphony*.

Rodzinski has long been widely admired and praised for his interpretation of this work. That prank-playing would-be hero of the 13th century is a zestful and truly Rabelaisian character as Rodzinski sees him. The sharp definition of dynamics, the technical precision, the tonal coloring of the score are most effectively realized. This is the best set of this tone poem that has been issued domestically to date. Although my admiration for this performance is wholehearted, I cannot say that I would set it above the one made for Polydor several years ago by Furtwängler. The famous German conductor brought a slyer twist to the exploits of Till, and he found more nuance and finesse in Strauss' scoring. Too, his performance was spaced on three sides, which is a point in its favor. But, having admired Rodzinski's interpretation of this score in the concert hall, I am delighted to own it on records. From the mechanical standpoint it is superior to the Furtwängler version.

Till remains the cleverest of the composer's tone poems, a work that is a constant delight as much to the musician as to the musical listener.

—P. H. R.

TOCH: *Pinocchio (A Merry Overture)*; played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, direction of Frederick Stock. Columbia disc 11665-D, price \$1.00.

▲ There is both wit and imagination in this buoyant and animated overture. Although stylistically it emanates from

Strauss, there is nonetheless much original treatment in the score. Wit and humor in music are provocative subjects. It would seem to us that Toch's music suggests these qualities in a rather intellectual manner. But the overture is entertaining and since Stock gives it an energetic performance, which is recorded very well, there is no question that many listeners will enjoy it.

The origin of the piece goes back to Toch's association with the New School for Social Research, when he first came to this country in 1934. While visiting Alvin Johnson of the school, he became interested in the marionette Pinocchio through the Johnson children's acquisition of Carlo Collodi's book which was at the time making a big hit. The score of the overture, dedicated to the Johnsons, carries the following verse:

Italian lore would have us know  
That gay marionette Pinocchio!  
With deviltry and gamin grace  
He led them all a merry chase.

The significance of the music is outlined thus in the published score: "Pinocchio is a legendary figure in Italian folklore created by Carlo Collodi. According to the story he was fashioned by a wood carver from a curiously animated piece of wood. His rascally demeanor and mischievous escapades gave his creator many an anxious moment. His particular failing was fibbing, each lie prompting his long nose to grow longer. He is a sort of brother in mischief to the German Till Eulenspiegel. To this day Italian children are warned by their elders that their noses will grow as long as Pinocchio's if they do not tell the truth."

The overture was first performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Klemperer in 1936. Stock first played it in 1937, and has since included it on many of his programs.

—P. G.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet* (5 sides); and MOUSSORGSKY: *Prelude to Khovantchina* (1 side); played by the Cleveland Orchestra, direction of Artur Rodzinski. Columbia set M-478, three discs, price \$3.50.

The American Music Lover

▲ On a par with the conductor's recent performance of the *Marche Slave* and the 1812 *Overture*, the reproduction here is full and lifelike and not as powerfully exaggerated as in the *Don Juan* set by Reiner. The Cleveland Orchestra fares well on records, undoubtedly because of the fine acoustics of Severance Hall, in which it performs.

The last recording of this work, by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, dates from 1937. Comparing it with the present set, one finds that the Boston version still holds its own, although it does not achieve quite as much volume. Although Rodzinski's performance is more taut and technically precise than Koussevitzky's and not quite so warm-hued in the love music, it is nonetheless every bit as discriminating, and its

dramatic vitality and tonal splendor will gladden many. Because of this it is unfortunate that the break at the end of side 2 was poorly chosen.

It has been said that to interpret this music adequately one should fully understand and appreciate the Shakespearian drama upon which it was based. Tchaikovsky had a great admiration for the drama, and later in life wanted to compose an opera on the subject. He wrote Mme. von Meck nearly a decade after finishing the present work: "I want to find an operatic subject that will be deeper and more exciting than *Undine*. What would you say to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?" True, it has been used many times both as operatic and symphonic canvas, but the richness of that tragedy is fathomless." Although there is no note

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of any kind attached to the score, its identification with various aspects of the play has been universally accepted. Not infrequently we hear the work performed, as one English critic has said, in a manner suggestive of Kipling rather than Shakespeare. One recalls the several popular versions of the works on records. Mengelberg, with all his technical resourcefulness, liked to inflate the drama, but I would not say à la Kipling. Stokowski's lush treatment of the score, on the other hand, suggested its derivation from D'Annunzio rather than Shakespeare.

The Moussorgsky selection, a colorful picture of dawn rising over Moscow, replaces the Harty recording in the Columbia catalogue. Rodzinski gives a most expressive performance of this music.

—P. H. R.



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### Concerto

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McDONALD: *Suite "From Childhood"*, for harp and orchestra; played by Edna Phillips and the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Harl McDonald. Victor set M-839, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ This suite was written at the suggestion of Edna Phillips, who pointed out to Harl McDonald the need for a new composition for harp and orchestra. The polite Mr. McDonald obliged, and completed the work in 1940. For thematic material he selected a group of traditional English nursery tunes: *I Saw Three Ships*, *Lavender's Blue* (first movement), *The Jolly Miller* and *Three Blind Mice* (second movement), and *There Was a Lady Loved a Swine, Oranges and Lemons*, and *St. Paul's Steeple* (last movement).

The music turns out to be very pleasant. Some conventional virtuoso passages for the harp can be ignored; otherwise McDonald treats his material with taste, and has scored with finesse. In the second movement he achieves real success. His harmonizations and the treatment as a whole are really poetic, and an English quality is present; Vaughan Williams or Bridge could have been the arranger. Effective writing for the harp features the set, and the music succeeds in its original intent—that of providing a worthwhile contribution to the literature of the harp.

The recording is brilliant, and the performance, with the conductor at the helm, presumably is all that could be demanded.

—H. C. S.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23*; played by Vladimir Horowitz and the NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Victor set M-800, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Two other recordings of this work are available. The more recent one features Petri as soloist in a rather dry performance. Petri seems not to feel this music, and is at times careless in his execution. Rubinstein's famous version has been the standard up to now. Though released in 1933, the recording is surprisingly vital, and can still be heard with pleasure. Naturally the present set boasts more life-like reproduction, and in certain sections, especially in climactic passages, it makes its predecessors sound thin and pale. However, if the volume control be turned up, it will be found that the Rubinstein set is far from being as limited as its age might suggest.

One outstanding difference is noted between the new set and that Horowitz and Toscanini made of the Brahms concerto. In the latter both artists seemed more sympathetic to the music than they do here. It may be argued that the Tchaikovsky is more frankly a virtuoso work, but surely one can be every inch the virtuoso and at the same time show more feeling for the music than Horowitz displays here. The last part of the slow movement (side 6) is a case in point, for with the fast

pace and unremitting brilliance of the playing, one hears very little of the expressive warmth usually found in this music. It may be that both Horowitz and Toscanini purposely perform with an objective brilliance in an attempt to get away from the conventional sentimentality of the music.

Though the sentiment may be missed, Horowitz and Toscanini achieve some thrilling moments. I prefer their choice of tempo in the first movement to Barbirolli's, which is more deliberate. The opening of the new set has the authoritative Toscanini bite, which is heard to best advantage in so dramatic a section. Horowitz is aided by the recording, and his pianistics are very exciting. Rubinstein, no mean technician himself, also turns in some noteworthy feats, though his rendition of the cadenza is not as flashy. At the conclusion of this movement, just before the octaves, Horowitz brings out a line in the left hand I have never heard; it's in the music, however. The slow

movement is better played in the older set; the phrasing is rounder, and Rubinstein performs with more feeling. I have mentioned the curious treatment brought to side 6. Even Horowitz cannot maintain the pace that he or Toscanini sets, without losing some dignity. The finale is the one movement I would unhesitatingly call superior to that in M-180. Here we have superb recording, spotless execution, and perfect timing on both sides.

It remains to be added that the breaks in both sets are the same, that there are some bad surfaces in the newer, and a generally high surface level in the older. Thus the prospective buyer is faced with a not uncommon choice: the selection between a fine interpretation with somewhat inferior recording and a brilliant performance and recording that does not possess equal interpretative merit. I am retaining both sets, and will turn to the newer when in the mood for some electrifying piano playing.

—H. C. S.



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## Chamber Music

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 1 in F major* (for cello and piano), *Op. 5, No. 1*; played by Pablo Casals and Mieczyslaw Horszowski. Victor set M-843, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ Beethoven had not yet broken with the traditions of the 18th century when he wrote this work. As someone recently remarked to me, the composer in his early violin and cello sonatas was on his good behavoir; he had not yet learned the value of musical rudeness or felt the urge of protest. But there is more to these earlier works than most people care to concede; many of the characteristic technical devices of musical exposition that are encountered in his later works are already present in his early compositions for stringed instruments and piano. And Beethoven always had a true understanding of the sustained and singing powers of the cello as against those of the piano, and this has made his works for these two instruments among the most valued in the cello repertory.

This early sonata is far more episodic than the later ones; it is very close in structure to the second, which has been recorded by Piatigorsky and Schnabel. Further, the piano has the lion's share of the music; because of this the artistry of the pianist, who must not permit the cello to get lost or submerged, is very important. Neither Casals nor his remarkably gifted partner seek to conceal the episodic character of the music. Casals' performance is the most remarkable because he does not seek to dominate or to exploit his instrument where it is not intended to stand forth. And Horszowski's is eminently artistic because he plays with fluency and ease without stealing the whole show. It should be remembered in this connection that the modern piano is

more powerful than the instrument of Beethoven's day, while the cello is largely the same. The pianist's ability would seem to be the more remarkable in view of the fact that the recording has been accomplished with a singularly lifelike balance.

The sonata is in two movements, the first prefaced by an introductory adagio. The opening movement is far too long for its own good, taking four sides, while the Haydnesque rondo takes only two. Only the most consummate musicianship can make a work of this kind worth acquiring on records, but this we have in the present performance. It is worthy of a place beside the Piatigorsky-Schnabel album of the *G minor Sonata*.

—P. H. R.

**DVORAK:** *Ballade in D minor, Op. 15*; and **ZARZYCKI:** *Mazurka, Op. 26*; played by Ossy Renardy, violin. Victor disc 18294, price \$1.00.

▲ Recorded here for the first time, the *Ballade* was composed in 1885. In the new biography of the composer, Paul Stefan writes that "the pain expressed by the whole composition gives rise to the supposition that in this work he was employing a sketch intended for, but not carried out, in the second movement of the D minor symphony." Like the greater part of that symphony, this work is not typical of Dvorak the nationalist. It is rugged and somewhat Brahmsian, classic in structure, stormy in mood. Perhaps it will not turn out to be one of the most endearing examples of the composer's work, but there is enough in it to warrant its release. The same cannot be said of the curious Zarzycki showpiece, and neither Renardy's brilliant performance nor the excellent recording relieves the general tedium.

—H. C. S.

**DVORAK:** *Quartet in E flat, Op. 51*; played by the Busch Quartet. Columbia set M-480, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ Strange are the ways of the recording companies. For no perceptible reason, Columbia issues this set now, apparently forgetting the admirable version by the Lener Quartet that they released about

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two years ago. If the latter were poorly performed, or cut, or poorly recorded, there might be a reason for the duplication; but since the previous set is in many ways superior to the new one, the whole affair becomes incomprehensible. There are other Dvorak quartets to which the Busch ensemble could have turned if they were determined to record one of that composer's chamber works.

The new release is good, but not good enough to displace the other. The Lener version is elegant and sensitive, though it has a tendency to feature the first violin to the detriment of the general balance. Despite that, I believe that they captured a mood that is missing here. The second and third movements are good examples; the lightness achieved in the vivace section and the poetry of the Romance make the performance one of the best things the Lener group has ever done. In those movements the Busch quartet is heavier and their tone is not at all times agreeable; the treatment of the slow movement is almost melodramtic, and while it might be just the thing for a late Beethoven quartet, the intensity is misapplied to so dreamy a fragment as the Romance. I think, however, that in the finale, up to the closing measures, the Busches get better results than their competitors, who are perhaps too polite and flowery, almost feminine. But while the Leners do not conclude the work with the speed and dash of the Busch Quartet—a speed that seems unwarranted—they get a captivating effect in the *poco meno mosso* section that the latter ensemble passes over in their seeming haste to end with a flourish.

The recording in both is good, though Columbia still continues to overamplify loud sections almost to chamber orchestra proportions. Such overamplification becomes extremely evident when the set is played against a good example of chamber music recording, such as Schubert's *B flat Quartet*, which the Busch Quartet made for Victor. (The latter, which should be in every collection, is to my mind one of the greatest specimens of quartet reproduction.) Had the present set been the only version of Dvo-

rak's *Op. 51* in the catalogue, one would have welcomed it as a musically and adequately represented; as it is, one cannot but regret the useless duplication. At any rate, those who buy this quartet—music in which Dvorak never spoke more cheerfully of spontaneously—be it the Lener or Busch set, will not spend money to better musical advantage for a long time to come.

—H. C. S.

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BACH: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*; and BRAHMS: *Choral Prelude No. 8* — *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*, Op. 122; played by E. Power Biggs on the organ in the Memorial Church of Harvard University. Victor disc 18292, price \$1.00.

▲ The Bach excerpt has been recorded many times before in divers arrangements (the original scoring calls for chorus, strings and solo oboe). Here Biggs plays very well, with simplicity and a flowing line. More interesting is the Brahms work, which appears to be a first recording. It is based on a sixteenth-century melody attributed to Praetorius, and is accorded a quiet, contemplative treatment. The music is not especially couched in the Brahms idiom, and could have been written by any of his lesser contemporaries. Nevertheless the tune has a dignity of its own and the disc is decidedly worth owning. Biggs plays with more warmth than has been his custom in former recordings, and employs a more colorful registration. The recording on both sides is excellent, but the surfaces are poor.

—H. C. S.

CHABRIER: *Trois Valses Romantiques*; played by Robert and Gaby Casadesus, duo-pianists. Columbia set X-209, two 10-inch discs, price \$2.00.

▲ These waltzes were written in 1883, but could easily have been composed in the 1920s. They are surprisingly modern; not modern in the sense of those who employ dissonance, but in the outlook of the composer. Recalling the pungent and witty turns of Poulenc and Francaix, it is hard to believe that the present pieces were composed during an era when Saint-Saëns was the leader of

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French music. I do not wish to imply that the *Valses Romantiques* are masterpieces, for such is not the case. Rather they are frothy, clever, and sophisticated, with that glittering veneer associated with the wit and workmanship of Ravel and the flippancy of a post-war generation. The rhythms are definitely jazzy in spots, and there are several "blues" modulations.

The music sounds difficult to play; it is very pianistic, and utilizes the capabilities of the ensemble to best advantage. Some of the writing makes a passing bow to Chopin. There are three movements, the second of which, I think, is the weakest. The third, marked *animé*, owns fascinating harmonizations and is very colorful. Hint to choreographers: it would make excellent ballet music. As a whole the work is enjoyable, and is a real contribution to two-piano recordings. Casadesus and his wife make a fine musical team, playing with spirit and coordination. The eminent French artist has his usual bad luck with the recorders, for the reproduction does not come up to the best modern standards, and there are bad surfaces on sides 2 and 4. —H. C. S.

MOZART: *Sonatas in G, K. 283, and D, K. 576*; played by Claudio Arrau, piano. Victor set M-842, three discs, \$3.50.

▲ Though no stranger to records, Arrau now makes his debut under a domestic label. He had recorded in Europe previously, and there are wonderful reports about a *Carnaval* and some singles he made there. I have not been able to hear them, but have heard him twice in concert, and Arrau impresses me as one of the best of the younger pianists. That he has a brilliant technique goes without saying: all pianists today have; but in addition he boasts a musicianship and intelligence that are not too common. A little more fire and spontaneity, perhaps a little more imagination, would place him among the very select. As it is, his interpretations are models of careful planning, and are always in good taste. He is heard to good advantage in these sonatas, for Mozart demands good taste, clean execution and planning and an excess of fiery playing would be out of place.

In the *Sonata in G* Arrau takes certain liberties to which fanatical Mozart students might object. He neglects many of the rests, and some of his accents are curious. These faults, however—if they are faults —, are minor, and the masterly smoothness of the execution, the fine legato, and the general tidiness are all that one could ask for. Arrau is solid; he does not consciously strive for the pseudo-harpsichord effects that he easily could manage if he wished. The beautiful, almost Schubertian, second movement is played with dignity.

Several months ago Casadesus recorded the *Sonata in D* for Columbia. Both he and Arrau have a wonderful finish to their execution, but there the resemblance ends. Casadesus is daintier; in certain things he may be superior, but I do not think that he is the thinker Arrau is. His art is more on the surface, and a comparison of the slow movements will prove this point. The slower tempo in the newer set is far more suited to the music than the Frenchman's virtual jog-trot. This movement, marked *adagio*, is one of Mozart's most personal expressions, and Casadesus misses the mood almost entirely. Arrau has a much better understanding of its essential character. As might be expected, Casadesus recovers himself in the brilliant and objective finale, though his colleague matches him note for note, and ends the work in a more poetic fashion.

The recording here is good, but suffers from noisy surfaces (as does the Columbia set, which is even worse in that respect). —H. C. S.

RACHMANINOFF: *Prelude in G minor, Op. 23, No. 5*; and *Prelude in B minor, Op. 32, No. 10*; played by Benno Moiseivitch. Victor disc 18295, price \$1.00.

▲ The *G minor Prelude* is probably Rachmaninoff's second most popular work, giving way only to that in C sharp minor. Therefore it is surprising that it is represented in the major domestic catalogues by only one piano version — and one that few people are likely to have. I refer to the filler in M-117, where Horowitz plays the third concerto. The

*Prelude in B minor* is a first domestic recording — probably a first recording anywhere. Both are excellent vehicles to demonstrate the artistry of Moiseivitch. In the more familiar *Prelude* his performance is superior to that of Horowitz; he has more feeling for the music and displays a greater degree of sensitiveness. An ever-present feature of a Moiseivitch rendition is the smoothness and the feeling of ease and surety, and one is not disappointed in the present disc. Notice the fine, cleanly articulated left-hand passages in the middle section. No covering-up there. Less flashy is the *B minor Prelude*, a rather long and melancholy work that does not possess sufficient variety to hold one's interest throughout. The recording is good.

—H. C. S.



Voice

BLAND: *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny*; and FOSTER: *My Old Kentucky Home*; sung by Marian Anderson, contralto, with Victor Symphony Orchestra, Charles O'Connell, conductor. Victor disc 18314, price \$1.00.

▲ Shades of Alma Gluck! For all I know the popular soprano's recording of *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* may still rank as the all-time best seller. In any case it is not surprising, from time to time, to find other singers attempting to duplicate her success. Miss Anderson, unlike most of them, avoids the pitfall of excessive sentimentality, and her voice is at its loveliest. It is a pity that her simple and appealing singing should have to contend with such a fancy orchestral background. She could have made her points so much more effectively without so much help. The recording is satisfactory.

—P. M.

RICHARD CROOKS IN SONG: *Floridante: Alma mia* (Handel); *Comus: Preach me not your Musty Rules* (Arne); *Serenade* (Haydn) (disc 2175); *Parthenope: Sei mia gioia* (Handel); *Dedication* (*Widmung*, Op. 14, No. 1) (Franz); *L'Adieu du Matin* (Pessard) (disc 2176); *A Dream* (*En Dröm*, Op. 48,—6) (Grieg); *Serenade* (*Ständchen: Schwanengesang*, No. 4) (Schubert) (disc 2177); *I Love Thee* (*Jeg elsker dig*, Op. 5) (Grieg); *Have you seen but a Whyte Lillie Grow* (Old English) (disc 2178); *Hark, How Still* (*Stille Sicherheit*, Op. 10, No. 2) (Franz); *Passing By* (Purcell-Cockram) (disc 2179); sung by Richard Crooks, tenor, with piano accompaniment by Frederick Schauwecker. Victor set M-846, price \$4.75.

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operatic recital of a couple of years ago. Because of the greater intimacy of the song (as opposed to the operatic aria) this form is for the performer, paradoxically, less demanding, but more exacting. Consequently Mr. Crooks is here called on for few big climaxes, and we have a consequent scarcity in this album of those spread high tones and pale falsettos that so often find their way into his singing. He is never entirely free from mannerisms, but the most serious charge to be laid against him here is that his English diction seems slightly affected.

The best things in the set, to my taste, are the two old English melodies. It was high time we had a new version of *Have you seen but a Whyte Lillie Grou*, and Mr. Crooks gives us a good one, despite the fact that the lower part of his voice is inclined to be weak. The scale in the opening phase is beautifully done, and there is tenderness (though by no means too much) throughout the song. *Preach me not* from Dr. Arne's *Comus* is fine old-fashioned, full-blooded music, and here it benefits by a good open performance. For a third "old" English number, the tenor sings *Passing By*, and the annotator falls into the time-honored error of attributing this song to Henry Purcell's son Edward. As a matter of fact the composer of this song was Edward Purcell-Cockram, who died as recently as 1932. The fact that he allowed his song to pass for the work of his namesake has led to at least one lawsuit, for it was published by an American house which couldn't believe that this could be a copyright infringement. The words, incidentally, are similarly misattributed to Robert Herrick, although they are actually too old to have been his work.

Handel's *Alma Mia* finds its way for the third time in 1941 into one of Victor's song albums. In it I find the tenor's singing rather listless at first and definitely rushed later on where the phrasing apparently taxes his breath supply. The other Handel air, *Sei mia gloria*, being more spirited, is far better done. The Pessard song is a welcome old friend, although I cannot say that Crooks effaces the memory of the acoustic Clement disc

— one of the most artistic song records I know.

The rest of the recital is made up of German and Norwegian songs done into English. Perhaps a few quotations will convey an idea of the quality of the translations: "Thy perfect bliss I set all else before;" "Dost thou thine own fair songs not know?" "Bid it love be still," etc., etc. The worst of the lot, I feel, is poor Grieg's *Dream*, with its climax on "My dream became reality." Surely there should be some poetic standard even for translations! Frederick Schauwecker furnishes satisfactory accompaniments, and the recording is good.

—P. M.

**DONIZETTI: Lucia di Lammermoor—**  
*Act III, Scene 3* (complete); sung by Jan Peerce (tenor), Arthur Kent (baritone), with Chorus and the Victor Symphony Orchestra, direction of Wilfred Pellerier. Victor set M-845, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ This seems a strange choice of music for an artist of Peerce's calibre to make his recorded debut in. The so-called Tomb Scene from *Lucia* is one of those superfluous operatic scenes in which an incongruous situation is developed to permit a tenor to shine. Edgar, disillusioned and love-thwarted, arrives among the tombs of his ancestors where he proceeds in true operatic fashion to soliloquize melodramatically until Raymond and the chorus arrive with news of Lucy's death. Edgar then knifes himself and in the good old fashioned operatic manner sings forcefully before expiring. The music to the scene boasts two effective tenor arias, one of which, *Fra poco a me ricovero*, ranks among the best pieces in the opera, but otherwise most of it is melodrama that shows no inspiration.

The tenor Jan Peerce, who won his laurels on the stage and on the broadcasts of the Radio City Music Hall in New York, has recently joined the Metropolitan Opera, where he was acclaimed by critics as a valuable addition to its roster. Peerce possesses a fine, manly voice which he uses with variable success. It has power; yet when the tenor wishes, he can sing with lyrical ease and assur-

ance. Tendencies to push the tone and to be explosive upon occasion are evidenced in this recording. But the remarkable power and range of the voice, and the singer's manly artistry, establish him as one of the foremost American tenors. Stylistically he has much to offer and his diction is unusually good.

Arthur Kent, the baritone, gives a sympathetic account of the negligible part of Raymond here, and the chorus and orchestra ably acquit themselves under Mr. Pelletier's direction.

Returning to the recordings that Gigli, Pinza and the Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra made of this scene nearly ten years ago (Victor discs 6876 and 8096), one is reminded how fine the vocal recordings of that period were. One is also reminded of the rare vocal quality that Gigli possessed, and the incredibly bad taste and poor style he had. I remember a conversation I had with one of the great voice maestros in Italy in 1932. "If Gigli had the style," he said, "he would be a greater artist than Caruso ever was, for basically he has a finer voice than Caruso." Pearce is not guilty of the distasteful sobbing and "emoting" in which Gigli indulges, but on the other hand he does not own the sensuous tonal quality of Gigli at his best. In the recitative *Tombe degl'avi miei*, Gigli's style is negligible, but in his singing of the aria *Fra poco* he is heard at his best.

Naturally the chorus and orchestra emerge from the newer recording with more realism and sonority. The recording here is full and vital. —P. H. R.

ENGLISH FOLK SONGS AND BALADS: *'Cos I Were Shy*; *The Derby Tup*; *Barbara Allen* (disc 262); *Edward, Edward* (disc 263); *Oh No, John*; *The Spring Song*; *Lilliberlero*; *The Hanging Tune* (disc 264); *The Crocodile*; *The Sweet Nightingale* (disc 265); sung by G. Marston Haddock, accompanied on guitar, lute and cithern by Wallace House. Musicraft set 55, four 10-inch discs, price \$3.50.

▲ The difference between a folk song and a ballad lies in the narrative quality of the latter and, usually, its greater length. Both stem directly from the people. There still is some confusion, however, about the term "ballad", which, since authorities differ, cannot be resolved here. The usual definition calls it (the folk ballad, not the French ballade) a narrative poem in stanzas rhyming *abab*, of which the first and third lines have three accents, against two in the second and fourth. But this definition does not always hold; *Edward* has a very complicated rhyme scheme. Perhaps the only criterion is that a ballad give us the sense of tradition and a flavor of spontaneity, with unschooled poetic diction. Two excellent essays on the subject are the introduction to Percy's *Reliques* and Gummere's fine essay in his *Old English Ballads*.

To most who buy this album the music will be the more important element, but it would be unwise to pass over the poetry. The music, obviously of folk character — simple, strophic, and melodious — is indeed lovely. Its primary

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purpose, however, is to back up the words. It is idle to fall into the old chicken-and-egg speculation as to which came first, nor have we the space to advance the leading arguments. Let us take the established fact that, in Gummere's words, "an unsung ballad is a contradiction in terms". Words and music cannot be divorced; in the later art song the music often is of more importance, but here they are inseparable.

A number of the pieces that Haddock sings is light and charming, with catchy lyrics and melodious tunes. These include *Cos I Were Shy*, *The Derby Tup* (with an irresistible refrain), *Ob No, John* (familiar in a four-part arrangement) and *The Crocodile*. *Barbara Allen* has been done many times, the most recent being Niles' version for Victor. The poem has come down in several forms; Haddock follows Percy's original transcription, but, because of its length, had to leave out several stanzas. Originally the title was *Barbara Allen's Cruelty, or the young man's tragedy*. The cruelty occurs in a stanza Haddock omits: our young man lies dead from unrequited love, and

With scornful eye she looked downe  
Her cheeke with laughter swellin  
Whilst all her friends cryd out amaine  
"Unworthye Barbara Allen!"

She makes adequate retribution, however.

*Edward* is one of the most famous of all ballads. First printed (I believe) in the *Reliques*, it is a superb poem, the last stanza coming with terrific impact. *Lilliburlero* was a popular song of the Restoration, and was parodied in *The Beggar's Opera*. Some of the verses are omitted here, stripping the song of some of its political significance, though not all: listen carefully to the last line, where James II is disrespectfully handled. The *Hanging Tune* is early Elizabethan and is better known as *Fortune My Foe*. It was mentioned by many poets, including Spenser and Shakespeare, while Byrd wrote a set of variations on it.

This is a delightful album and worth having. Unfortunately, no notes come with the set. Haddock sings intelligently, he has a good voice, his diction is far bet-

ter than average, and the recording is good. His choice of songs was well made, for every one is a worthy selection. Hear the first disc if you have a chance, and you'll probably end up with the set in your possession.

—H. C. S.

FAURE: *Requiem*, Op. 48; and MOZ-

ART: *Ave Verum Corpus*, K. 618 (single face); performed by the Montreal Festivals Orchestra, Wilfred Pellerin, conductor; Les Disciples de Massenet (chorus), C. Goulet, director; Marcelle Denya, soprano, and Mack Harrell, baritone. Victor set M-844, five discs, price \$5.50.

▲ That such a work as the Fauré *Requiem* has reached its third recording is certainly a healthy sign of the times. Contrary to advance publicity this is not "a Victor first," for a French recording was repressed in this country some ten years or so ago. It had vanished from the catalogue, however, in 1939, when the Columbia set was issued. The new performance is, of course, the first made on this hemisphere. Through the two recordings now available its popularity will have a chance to spread.

The *Requiem* is a work to which we can return again and again without exhausting its beauties. More than any other work I know of its kind, it has a personal quality which speaks directly to the hearer. It is this quality, too, that explains a feeling I have about it: it is almost as if I had written it myself, or would have done so if Fauré had not composed it first. The text of the *Requiem Mass* is susceptible of a great many musical interpretations, from the dramatic readings of Verdi, Mozart and Berlioz to the dignity of the Cherubini and the mixture of tranquillity and restlessness which is the Fauré. None of the other masters has been so economical of time or of expression as this great Frenchman. He has cut down the length of the work by illuminating those parts of the text that did not fit in with his conception. And he has made use of that most powerful of devices for artistic expressiveness — understatement. The melodies in this work are often inexplicably moving — the *Pie Jesu*, the

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*Libera me*, or the theme that introduces the *Agnus Dei* — yet they never lack a certain aristocracy of expression, a calm front which covers, though it does not hide, a deep and very human feeling.

The choice between the two available recorded performances is not a clear case of one being better than the other. Both have obvious virtues and defects. Mr. Pelletier gets a better integrated performance from his Montreal musicians than did M. Bourmauck from his Lyonnaise organization. The Canadian chorus is bigger and better trained. The weakness of the new Victor set, it seems to me, lies in this very strength. For in a work whose charm lies to so great an extent in its reserve, climaxes such as we have on these records are a bit out of place. I would blame this on a lack of full understanding, on the conductor's part, of the musical style of Fauré. The tempi throughout are rather fast, and the dynamics are inclined to be loud. There is too much of drama, the kind of drama that is right in the Verdi work, but hardly belongs here. The Columbia set, on the other hand, never errs in this way. The spirit is right, and tempi and dynamics never jar. But there is a lack of precision in the singing which keeps the performance from being altogether satisfactory. The Victor version probably stands a better chance of achieving popularity, but the Columbia is more likely to promote a true understanding of the *Requiem*. The soloists in the new recording are well in the picture. The most beautiful singing I have heard of the *Pie Jesu* was done by Mme. Malnory-Marseillac in the old Victor recording: it is hard to believe that her sympathetic voice and style will ever be bettered. Miss Denya, however, is more satisfying than Mlle. Dupont, who sang this part in the Columbia set. Mr. Harrell does a good, musicianly job. His voice is heavier than the equally admirable M. Didier, and perhaps less authentically French.

For good measure Victor gives us Mozart's *Ave Verum* (the rapid tempo of the *Agnus Dei* save one record side). The singing here, too, is full and sonorous: a solid rather than an imaginative reading.

—P. M.

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FLAMENCO MUSIC; played by Jeronimo Villarino, guitar and voice, assisted by La Gitanilla, voice, castanets, heel tapping. Musicraft set No. N-5, four 10-inch discs, price \$3.50.

▲ Here we have Spanish gypsy music purported to be performed in the authentic manner. Villarino is said to have built an enviable reputation in his native land for the presentation of this music. This may be so, but he is hardly the artist that "La Nina de los Peinos" is, and the Columbia album of that inimitable woman is worth a dozen of this one. Villarino is a brilliant guitarist and his guitar solos are in one or two cases well worth acquiring, but it is doubtful if many Americans will appreciate his off-pitch singing on the reverse faces, authentic style or not. La Gitanella, his companion, is not much better blessed vocally, but she does some nice castanet and heel-tapping work.

—P. G.

GREAT SONGS OF FAITH: *The Messiah: He shall feed His Flock; He was Despised* (Handel) (disc 18324); *St. Paul: But the Lord is mindful of His own; Elijah: O rest in the Lord* (Mendelssohn) (disc 18325); *St. John Passion: It is Fulfilled (Es ist vollbracht)* (Bach) (disc 18326); sung by Marian Anderson, contralto, with Victor Symphony Orchestra, Charles O'Connell, conductor. Victor set M-850, \$3.50.

▲ This rather oddly-titled collection contains some of the best singing we have had from Marian Anderson. The tonal quality throughout is limpid and clear, and the performances, especially of the Handel airs, are beautifully restrained. The contralto has never been notable for a very strong rhythmic sense, and this deficiency is to some degree noticeable here; but there are tremendous compensations. The greatest of these is the feeling of sincerity and deep understanding with which she infuses the music. Her performance of *He was Despised* (a modern recording of which was long overdue) is very moving because she simply lends to it her rich voice and lets it speak for itself. Incidentally, it is by a similar simplicity — by the skillful employment of

strong but perfectly plain cadences—that the composer makes his point in this most affecting of oratorio arias. In this recording, as in most performances, the middle section and the repeat of the opening are omitted, so that it becomes a sort of arioso rather than a three-part aria. *He Shall Feed His Flock* is done quite broadly, so that there is not room on the record for the recitative. Like Mme. Matzenauer, whose version of this air is a recorded classic (Victor 6555), she disregards the tradition of tying over the first note of the opening phrase to give a greater emphasis to the word *He*.

In the *St. Paul* selection the singer finds herself not quite at ease in the recitative, and the aria would benefit by a greater melodic curve. The singing here is a bit metronomic. There are lovely details in *O rest in the Lord*, and the Bach is sung with a beautifully pointed vocal quality. The last, however, brings up once more the question of translations. Granting the advantage of clarifying the meaning of such music as this for the English-speaking listener, I'm afraid I can't see what good it does to sing Bach in English which can be understood only with difficulty. The fact is that the melody fits the German words, so that they will come through if sung with reasonable distinctness. And if when the English words are understandable they sound obviously like a translation, I don't feel that much has been gained. The advocates of translated music will have to supply us with some better English versions than this if they expect to make their point. But the recording is well worth having because of the vocal expressiveness which Miss Anderson brings to the music. And, to return to the matter of cadences, Bach has certainly made eloquent use of them here. The recording in this set is generally very good, but the surfaces are not all they should be.

—P. M.

FOGEL: *Waltz*; and COSSACK WAR SONG: *In 1793*; sung by the General Platoff Don Cossack Choir, N. Kosztrukoff, conductor. Victor 10-inch disc 2185, price \$7.75.

▲ Here is the other "Don Cosack Choir"

in a couple of hearty and spirited performances — more truly spirited, it seems to me, than any I have heard from Serge Jaroff's virtuoso organization. The first song is frankly a stunt, though not actually a Russian stunt, and by no means a new one. F. A. Vogel's *Waltz* comes from the German male chorus repertoire. It must have enjoyed some fame many years ago, for it appears in English translation in Willard's *Arion*, a collection of male voice part-songs published in Boston in 1862. That it is here sung in Russian will not bother anyone, for the text is completely innocuous: the idea is simply to transform the chorus for the moment into a ball-room orchestra. *In 1793* is a raucous affair commemorating, I suppose, some event in Russian, or Don Cossack, history. The recording is very good. — P. M.

KEEL: *Tomorrow*; and CLARKE: *The*

*Blind Ploughman*; sung by Nelson Eddy, baritone, with orchestra conducted by Robert Armbruster. Columbia 10-inch disc 17292D, price \$.75.

▲ Given a good he-man song, Nelson Eddy can be as spirited as the next baritone. *Tomorrow*, from Frederick Keel's *Salt Water Ballads*, is a setting of a Masefield poem. Without being particularly salty, Mr. Eddy's voice has all the power the music needs and his singing is as subtle as it could very well be in this kind of song. *The Blind Ploughman* is rather pale in contrast, but I am sure the Eddy version will find many admirers.

—P. M.

SECCHI: *Love Me or Not*; and FISHER: *Tavern Song*; sung by Norman Cordon, basso, with piano accompaniment by Karl Kritz. Victor 10-inch disc 2180, price \$.75.

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▲ The labeling of *Love Me or Not* may prove a bit confusing to anyone who hasn't seen the music: "From *Campion's Fourth Book of Airs*, 1617" refers to the poem only. The melody seems to have been discovered somewhere among the works of Secchi by that inveterate arranger known as "A. L." (in private life Amelia Lehmann, mother of the more celebrated Liza Lehmann). The song, then, is a hybrid, but not an unattractive one, for the spirit of the tune goes well with that of the poem, and the words for the most part fit its accents neatly enough. Some rearranging has been done in order to compress the poet's three stanzas into two—but this information is only for purists. Mr. Cordon's rich voice and healthily masculine style bring out the best that is in the song, and his diction is a model of clarity. Decidedly masculine and healthy, too, is his singing of the Fisher *Tavern Song*, a rousing drinking song which calls for just the qualities he brings to it. The recording is good.

—P. M.

VERDI: *Aida* — *Celeste Aida*; sung by Beniamino Gigli with Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr; and *Aida* — *O patria mia*; sung by Rose Bampton with Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor disc 18221.

GILBERT and SULLIVAN: *Pinafore* — *When I Was A Lad*; and O'HARA: *There Is No Death*; sung by John Charles Thomas with Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Charles O'Connell. Victor disc 18223. Specially priced, both for \$1.00.

▲ Here are the vocals which stores across country have been offering in the special two-for-one sale by Victor. Thomas is in lusty voice and those who admire O'Hara's song, more perhaps for its sentiment than its music, will find that singer has done full justice to it. As for Thomas' performance of the Gilbert and Sullivan air, it is a wide departure from tradition. To our way of thinking the singer is not near as funny as he may think he is.

## THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

\$3.00 a Year

CARL ENGEL, Editor

75c a Copy

October, 1941

Vol. XXVII, No. 4

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MOZART'S SACRAMENTAL LITANIES AND THEIR FORERUNNERS ..... Karl August Rosenthal (New York)

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

QUARTERLY BOOK-LIST

QUARTERLY RECORD-LIST

"By far the most important of the American periodicals from the point of view of musical scholarship is the *Musical Quarterly*. It is a serious review, cosmopolitan in character, and has published valuable contributions from most of the leading writers of music in Europe and America."—*Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*

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Gigli sings the first part of the tenor aria from *Aida* with beautiful lyric tone. His recitative, however, is sadly lacking in style, and later, in the climax of the aria, there is a suggestion that the tessitura is not so easy for him. The final note certainly is taken with effort and poor quality.

It is Miss Bampton who emerges here as the accomplished artist. Her recording of the recitative and aria from the third act of *Aida* (sung complete) ranks among the best recordings of this scene. This is the finest singing that the soprano has accomplished to date on records.

The orchestral accompaniments in both discs meet the requirements of the singers, and the recording in all cases is good.

—P. G.

**VERDI:** *Falstaff: Monologo di Ford—E' sogno? o realtà?*; and **RONCHIELLI:** *La Gioconda: Monologo — O monumento*; sung by Leonard Warren, baritone, with Victor Symphony Orchestra, Wilfred Pelletier, conductor. Victor disc 18293, price \$1.00.

▲ Leonard Warren is the possessor of a large and agreeable voice and a talent impressive enough to have won him a contract with the Metropolitan by way of the "auditions of the air." Aside from a modest portion in the ensemble of the Bampton-Tibbett *Simone Boccanegra* record of a couple of years ago (Victor 15642) this is his first appearance on Victor discs. He is certainly to be congratulated on his choice of unacknowledged material. The *Falstaff* aria should have a wide appeal, for it unites the Verdian gift of melody with the marvelously refined musical craftsmanship that the composer developed as he grew older. It was in this music that Lawrence Tibbett won his first real success at the Metropolitan, and I have often wondered why he did not record the scene. At any rate it is good to have the music made available now on a single disc. Mr. Warren's voice is heavier in quality than the real Italian baritone of Emilio Ghirardini, who sings the rôle of Ford in the complete Columbia recording of *Falstaff*. The young American lacks, too, the crispness and bite of that sing-

er's diction — the means by which he is able to impart to his singing so much of disillusionment and of venom. Quite naturally, Mr. Warren gets better recording, and the orchestral playing is superior on the Victor disc. The *Gioconda* scene is not in itself the most interesting piece of music in Italian opera, and the straightforwardness of the baritone's performance of it hardly helps it much. More subtlety in his delivery might have made up to some extent for what the music lacks.

—P. M.

## THE MUSIC MART

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### Unusual Christmas Recordings

By Pangrac A-Cappella Choir

*Ave Maria* (Fr. Witt); *Veni, Veni Emmanuel* (M. Haller); *Come All Ye Shepherds* (Old Carol); and *Silent Night* (Newly Harmonized). Disc. No. 1.

*Pastorella* (Brixii); *Natus est Emmanuel*; *De Mater Natus* (Of the Virgin Mother Born); *Quem Pastores Laudavere* (He, Whom Shepherds All Are Praising). Disc. No. 2.

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VERDI: *Don Carlos*: *O don fatale*; and PONCHIELLI: *La Gioconda*: *Voce di donna o d'angelo*; sung by Bruna Castagna, contralto, with orchestra conducted by Alfred Antonini. Columbia disc 71276D, price \$1.00.

▲ These two famous contralto arias have been strangely neglected by the recording companies in recent years. Miss Castagna's performances, therefore, fill a definite need, and would be welcome even if they were far less satisfactory than they are. Vocally, however, the lady does not eclipse the old favorite performances of Matzenauer, Onegin, and the various other old-timers who recorded these airs. The Castagna voice is ample and pleasing in the smoother passages of the *Don Carlos* scene, but she rather falls into the opening recitative. Not only is there a lack of stylistic breath and nobility at this point, but there are also tonal unsteadiness and inaccurate intonation. The *Gioconda* selection is, of course, smoother going throughout, and for this reason the contralto is more satisfying in it. Although her tempo seems a trifle fast, the quality of the voice has a peculiar fascination as we hear it in the sustained line of this music. All in all, this aria is the best thing Miss Castagna has given us on records so far.

—P. M.

WITT: *Ave Maria*; HALLER: *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*; PANGRAC (arr.): *Come, All Ye Shepherds*; GRUBER-PANGRAC: *Silent Night* (disc 1); and BRIXI: *Pastorella*; HORNİK: *Natus est Emmanuel*; PANGRAC (arr.): *De Matre Natus; Quem Pastores Laudovere* (disc 2); sung by Pangrac A Cappella, Francis A. Pangrac, conductor. Pangrac discs, price \$1.50 each.

▲ Records of *a Cappella* music are rare enough at any season, and they are always welcome, since the huge and tremendously rich literature has hardly been touched. The two discs here presented are obviously designed for the Christmas trade. While they do not take us back to the great days of polyphonic music (the earliest composer represented is Brix, who was born in 1732) they do present music that is unshackled and attractive. Only *Sil-*

*ent Night* is likely to be familiar to most hearers, and even this is presented in a new harmonization by the director of the choir. There is nothing radical about this arrangement, but it departs from the unadorned simplicity of the familiar harmonies. The Witt (1834-1888) *Ave Maria* and the Haller (1840-1915) *Veni, veni* are good examples of the choral music of their time. The other pieces are carols, each with its own attractiveness.

The Pangrac A Cappella is a mixed choir of fourteen voices. The tone quality is a little on the shrill side, but this is really a help in clarifying the moving parts. Generally speaking the intonation is good: the choir sticks together, whether adhering to the original key or exercising a chorus' privilege of dropping in pitch. The recording is satisfactory. —P. M.

TCHAIKOVSKY-SHVEDOFF: *Recollections of Tchaikovsky*; sung by the Don Cossack Choir, Serge Jaroff, conductor. Columbia 10-inch disc 4280, price \$7.75.

▲ Riding the tide of Tchaikovsky's present popularity, the Don Cossacks give us a medley of several of the composer's most popular tunes — *Marche Slave*, the *Andante cantabile* from the *Quartet in D* and the one from the *Fifth Symphony*, etc. There is considerable use of the high falsetto voices which can transform this choir into what amounts to a mixed chorus. And there is the attendant tonal unsteadiness which works against perfect clarity of intonation. I doubt that the real Tchaikovsky lover will find this collection of samples any more to his taste than the swing versions it is impossible to avoid hearing nowadays.

—P. M.

CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE; sung by the Victor Chapel Choir, with organ accompaniment. Victor set P-96, four 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

▲ In times like these, Christmas songs and carols make us realize the full significance of the holidays. These are not really all carols, but a goodly assortment of songs, hymns and carols which have been sung for a long, long time at the Yuletide season.

—P. G.



# OVERTONES

• The big news this month is that following his appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Toscanini made a series of recordings with that ensemble for Victor. There is a rumor to the effect that this is only one of several important recording dates in which the eminent Italian maestro will participate this season.

The Columbia Recording Corporation announces that it will forego a January Master-work list in order to permit its plants in Bridgeport and Hollywood, now working twenty-four hours a day, to achieve full production on current orders. The decision to drop the January Masterworks will permit the company to concentrate on a tremendous backlog of orders. The move will also result in faster and more adequate deliveries of current issues to dealers and record buyers, says Mr. Wallerstein, president of the company. Normally the Columbia January list would have been announced in mid-November, with deliveries made to the dealers in time for the Christmas season. The announcement of the February Masterworks list will be made at the end of December, with shipments planned for the middle of January.

The many readers, who have written to us from time to time to do what we could to get a recording of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler Symphony* will be glad to know that there may be two of these on the market shortly.

Dame Rumor can be a very mischievous and unreliable lady. It may well be that she is right in telling us that records are going up in price on the first of January, but we cannot help hoping that she is wrong. For recorded music is such a boon to the masses, and has become so much more accessible to those with limited budgets since the reduction in price, that it would be most unfortunate if it were found necessary to raise prices. But with everything else going up it is perhaps logical to expect records to be advanced in price also.

As in other fields the United States is assisting England with her major recording issues. The big sets of the month for November in England are the American-made Brahms' *Second Piano Concerto* in the performance by Horo-

witz and Toscanini, Prokofieff's *Lt. Kije Suite* in the Boston Symphony performance, and some singles by the Boston 'Pops' Orchestra and Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra. America having led the way, English Columbia finally came round to releasing Beecham's performance of Mozart's *E flat Symphony*. Says W. R. Anderson of this set: "This newest recording is rich in quiet content . . . the second movement . . . is as near complete satisfaction as one can hope to get . . . A grand moment is on side 4, just before the outburst — the key-move. I don't think I have ever heard the last half of this side done better . . . These 160 bars — that is all the movement runs to — make up one of the great autumnal glories of classical art."

The following are some new items issued in England during November:

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C minor (Pathétique)*, Op. 13; Moiseiwitsch. H. M. V. C-3246/47.

BUTTERWORTH: *A Shropshire Lad*; Roy Henderson (baritone) and Gerald Moore (piano). Decca M506/07.

DVORAK: *Ballade*; Frederick Grinke (violin) and Gerald Moore (piano). Decca K1017.

DVORAK: *Romantic Pieces*, Op. 75; Same artists. Decca K1016.

DVORAK: *Sonatina in G*, Op. 100; Grinke (violin) and Kendall Taylor (piano). Decca K1006/07.

GRIEG: *Homage March*, Op. 56; Hallé Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert. Columbia DX1037.

DVORAK: *Notturno for Strings*, Op. 40; Hallé Orch. direction of Leslie Heward. Columbia DX1040.

LISZT: *Ronde des Lutins (Gnomerenreigen)* and *Etude de Concert No. 3*; Frederic Lamond, (piano). Decca K1015.

Comin' Thro' the Rye; and Oft in the Stilly Night; Maggie Teyte (soprano) and Gerald Moore (piano). H. M. V. DA1804.

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### Other Recordings

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LEHAR (arr. Rubinstein): *Arabesque* on *The Merry Widow*; played by Arthur Loesser and Beryl Rubinstein, duopianists. Columbia disc 71209-D, \$1.00.

▲ This disc has little to commend it but its performance. Like most transcriptions of its kind, the main object seems to be a desire to test the capabilities of the pianos as a musical sewing machine to stitch various kinds of melodic embroidery. That the finished product is something of a misfit does not matter too much. Beryl Rubinstein has had distinguished predecessors in this sort of thing: Schulz-Evler, Tausig, Chasins, von Sternberg, Babin, and many others. He follows the same pattern, only in this case the original melodies are so weak that one feels his clever and very pianistic effort is wasted. The performance is brilliant enough to salvage something, and the recording is good.

—H. S. C.

*Those Evening Bells*; and *The Snow Has Blown Over Russia*; sung by the General Platoff Don Cossack Chorus, dir. by N. Kostrukoff. Victor disc 18236, price \$1.00.

▲ *The Snow Has Blown Over Russia* is popular Russian ballad, and is performed here in the customarily spectacular style of the Don Cossacks, with the usual diminuendos and swelling fortissimos. The other selection has a title that is self-explanatory, and the group loses no time in taking advantage of the opportunities afforded for musical onomatopoeia.

—H. C. S.

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### BOOK REVIEW

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(Continued from page 120)

ered". With canny insight, he lays his fingers on the strength and weakness of men like Bruckner, Hugo Wolf, Reger and others for whom preposterous claims have been advanced. He also makes some interesting comments on the true worth of Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Berlioz, and Liszt. In an age when most writers loudly decry the composers of the

19th century, Dr. Einstein's level-headed and unbiased treatment of the many figures who contributed to music's greatness during this period is particularly worthwhile reading. One does not have to share the author's views to realize that here is a man who knows musical values, and who has something distinctly valuable to contribute on the subject.

To the estimates of predecessors and contemporary scholars Dr. Einstein here adds his own interesting reflections, and one finds what he has to say equally absorbing and valuable. Mr. Searchinger has made an excellent translation from the original German.

It is books like this that provide the musical reader with a wider view of the art and that serve as a stimulus toward investigating new horizons.

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### BOOK REVIEW

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(Continued from page 128)

in which he writes with keen acumen. But it is a grand book nevertheless, a book from which the layman as well as the student will derive much profit.

Lang begins his book with a most interesting chapter on the music of Ancient Greece. Then comes Byzantine and Roman art. Medieval music is less impressively surveyed, but the chapter on the Renaissance shows a new impetus. One suspects that the author has his pet subjects and that when he dealt with those he found the going much easier. He writes well on Bach and Handel and their period. And his chapters on Haydn and Mozart, while presenting no new thoughts, are the admirable work of a serious scholar. One feels that the author flounders a little in his survey of the 19th century, but this is, of course, one of the most controversial of all periods in musical history. As the author approaches our own times, he writes more briefly, and yet not without interest. His short treatise on music in America is so good that one wishes he had extended it. All in all, a well written book which should occupy a conspicuous place on any library shelf it graces.

The American Music Lover

IN THE

# POPULAR VEIN

VAN NORMAN

AAAA—The Music of Vincent Youmans. Meyer Davis and his Orchestra. Columbia set C-77, price \$2.50.

• An utterly inexplicable phenomenon has been the absence of a Vincent Youmans collection in the deluge of albums that have poured from the presses in the last few years. We have had Irving Berlin albums, Jerome Kern albums, Herbert and Romberg albums aplenty. We have even had a Hoagy Carmichael album. But no Vincent Youmans. And yet he is one of the half-dozen really great American song-writers. During the comparatively short span of his active career he wrote more first-rate songs than any other American writer has done in a similar period of time. Had he not been struck down six years ago with a nearly fatal illness he would today perhaps merit the ranking of our No. 1 songwriter. Rumor has it that now, his health recovered, he is about to resume his career.

In the solid, four-square quality of his tunes, there is something that is peculiarly American, and it is a quality that no other composer has so consistently achieved. Gershwin used to catch it occasionally, and so did Roy Henderson in his De Sylva-Brown-Henderson days. But such men as Kern and Dick Rodgers, consummate melodists that they are, have never sounded it. Youman's voice is therefore one that we can ill afford to lose, and it is pleasant to note this belated recognition of his tremendous and well deserved popularity. Included in this group are *Carioca*, *Great Day*, *Hallelujah*, *Tea for Two* (from that spectacularly successful musical *No, No, Nanette*), *Without a Song*, *Time on My Hands*, *I Want To Be Happy*, and *I Know That You Know*. The arrangements are definitely on the Kostelanetz side, although the band is numerically of modest proportions; and while there is occasional striving for effects that are not quite achieved, they are in the main well suited to the material at hand. There is enough Youmans material for at least another album or two, and it is to be hoped that they will be forthcoming.

AAAA—*Little Fugue*; and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. Jan Savitt and his Orchestra. Victor 27670.

December, 1941

• The *Little Fugue* under consideration here is the *Little Organ Fugue in G minor* by Bach, familiar to many in Stokowski's orchestral transcription. The notion of swinging a Bach fugue is singularly audacious yet singularly logical, for if there is any form of so-called "classical" music that bears a close relationship to hot jazz, that form is the fugue. A good fugue virtually swings itself. It is swing, in fact. And Savitt's swell swinging of the present opus would have been even more effective had he followed the original more closely. In any case he deserves plenty of credit for seeing the possibilities for intelligent, discreet adaptations that lie in the classics. Like his other efforts along the same lines, this turns out very well indeed.

AAAA—*Just a Little Joint with a Juke Box*; and *The Three B's*. The Martins. Columbia 36393. *Buckle Down Winsoki*; and *Shady Lady*. Bird. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Columbia 36429.

• A superbly youthful musical show is *Best Foot Forward*, George Abbott's first hit of the season. And Mr. Abbott was very wise, in our estimation, in commissioning a pair of youthful writers to do the score. For Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin, song-writing novices in their early twenties, have turned out an amazingly fresh and vigorous lot of tunes for this swell show. Of course, both Blane and Martin are theatre-wise folks, Martin having done the vocal arrangements for probably a dozen musicals in the past few seasons, and Blane having appeared as vocalist in several. The Martins, a vocal foursome that includes Blane and Martin, played a conspicuous part in *Louisiana Purchase*, and Martin's close harmony is admirably adapted to these two clever numbers from the duo's show. The other pair of tunes also from *Best Foot Forward*, are equally interesting, although *Buckle Down Winsoki* is a 6/8 march and its designation as a fox-trot is therefore ridiculous. *Shady Lady* is a corking rhythm number which Goodman treats to a superbly smooth performance, including a highly delectable vocal sung by the same gal who sings it in the show.

AAA—*Let's Face It* Album. Hildegarde. Decca set 291.

• Along with *Best Foot Forward*, the season's reigning musical hit is *Let's Face It*. With a Cole Porter score and Danny Kaye's comedy antics, it appears to be set for a lengthy run, so we'll be hearing a lot of the music. Fortunately, Porter has come up with one of his finest scores; his best, we believe, since *Anything Goes*. Here is, above everything else, the work of a supreme craftsman. Not an inspired tune in the lot, but plenty of phrases, inner rhymes, etc., that are just short of inspired. *Farming* is one of the wittiest topical songs Porter has ever written. *Everything I Love* is a melody number that will bear constant repetition, and *A Little Rumba Numba, Ace in the Hole, I Hate You Darling, and You Irritate Me So* are all flawlessly, ingeniously contrived. Hildegarde does a debatably satisfactory job on them. We shouldn't say that comic songs are her forte, and three of these, or half the album, fall into that category. *Ev'rything I Love*, however, turns out beautifully, while *Ace in the Hole* and *A Little Rumba Numba* are almost equally effective. Another fetching photographic shot of Hildegarde appears on the cover. Remember the *Lady in the Dark* album? This may well be the new set's strongest selling point.

AAA—*Russ Colombo Album*. Victor set P-95, price \$2.50.

• The tragic death of Russ Colombo a few years ago cut short a certain career as one of the foremost lady-killers of our time. Had he lived there is no telling to what heights of popularity he would have soared. During the year or so that he did appear on the air and on records, he became a sort of cult with legions of impressionable females, and many of his records have become collector's items of the first water. Therefore this album should make everybody happy but dealers in rare records. Here are *Call Me Darling, Save the Last Dance for Me, Sweet and Lovely* (probably his best record), *Prisoner of Love, Paradise, Goodnight Sweetheart, Auf Wiederehn My Dear, and Where the Blue of the Night*. We still like Crosby.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for Oct. 1, 1941, State of New York, County of New York: Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Peter Hugh Reed, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor and publisher of THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher: Peter Hugh Reed, 45 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Editor: Peter Hugh Reed, 45 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y. Managing Editor: Paul Girard. Business Manager: Walter C. Ely, 1728 Grand Central Terminal Bldg., New York, N. Y. 2. That the owner is THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER (Peter Hugh Reed, sole owner), 45 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders,

## Other Current Popular Recordings of Merit

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AAA—*Notbin's*, and *Someone's Rocking My Dream Boat*. Ink Spots. Decca 4045.

AAA—*I Wanna Go Back to Texas*; and *Minka*. Mitchell Ayres and his Fashions in Music. Bluebird B-11336.

AAA—*The Bells of San Raquel*; and *Memory Lane*. Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra. Decca 4067.

AAA—*Jack and Jill*; and *Don't Let Julia Fool You*. Will Bradley and his Orchestra. Columbia 36572.

AAA—*St. James Infirmary*; and *You Are the One in My Heart*. Cab Calloway and his Orchestra. Okeh 6391.

AAA—*One Foot in Heaven*; and *Tune Town Shuffle*. Vaughn Monroe and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-11354.

AAA—*I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good*; and *This Is No Laughing Matter*. Dinah Shore. Bluebird B-11357.

AA—*I Think of You*; and *Mine*. Shep Fields and his Rhythm. Bluebird. B-11366.

AA—*A Week-end in Havana*; and *My Imaginary Love*. Bob Crosby and his Orchestra. Decca 4049.

AA—*Something New*; and *Moon Nocturne*. Count Basie and his Orchestra. Okeh 6449.

AA—*A Rhythm Hymn*; and *Blue River*. Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra. Decca 4071.

AA—*That Solid Old Man*; and *Worried Mind*. Larry Clinton's Bluebird Orchestra. Bluebird B-11343.

AA—*Sunday in Savannah*; and *Johnnie's in the Pantry*. Tony Pastor and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-11340.

AA—*The Walls Keep Talking*; and *Come Be My Love*. Gene Krupa and his Orchestra. Okeh 6438.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1941. [Seal] George Lorch.  
(My commission expires March 30, 1942.)

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